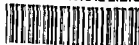


*Teaching the Language Arts*

# TEACHING THE LANGUAGE ARTS

MLSU - CENTRAL LIBRARY



11322EX

*Willard F. Tidyman*

PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION, STATE COLLEGE  
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

*Marguerite Butterfield*

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
STATE UNIVERSITY TEACHERS COLLEGE  
POTSDAM, NEW YORK

*SECOND EDITION*

McGRAW-HILL BOOK COMPANY, INC.

New York Toronto London 1959

## TEACHING THE LANGUAGE ARTS

Copyright © 1959 by the McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. Copyright, 1951, by the McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. Printed in the United States of America. All rights reserved. This book, or parts thereof, may not be reproduced in any form without permission of the publishers. *Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 59-7319*

III  
64604

# Preface

The recognition of the importance of language as a vital part of the experience of childhood, as a factor in the development of a wholesome personality, and as a means of securing social stability and social action continues to grow. Language offers the child a means of assimilating experiences, of carrying on activities in groups of peers and adults, and of developing a sense of personal worth. The changing world, with its increasingly complex problems of social adjustment, its need for clear thinking and cohesive effort, and its unparalleled emphasis on the mass means of communication—newspapers, radio, TV—places a premium on communication to which teachers and educators are alert, and presents a challenge which they are not unwilling to accept.

Fortunately the study of language as an art and as a school discipline has kept pace to some extent with the growing recognition of the importance of language for the child and for society. Continued interest in the study has added considerably to a body of knowledge about language teaching that has been accumulating over a number of years. Although more research is necessary, it is safe to say that a sound program of instruction can be set up on the basis of present knowledge. The problem is to collect, interpret, organize, and present this knowledge so that teachers can acquire it with a minimum of effort and can readily apply it in the classroom. This book is designed to help serve that end.

The revision of our earlier edition permits us to incorporate new topics, particularly sections on listening and foreign-language backgrounds; to add pictures and illustrations; to clarify further the organization among and within chapters; and to hold more consistently to concepts of functional



and integrated programs. On the last point, it is maintained that there is no basis of conflict between a functional and an integrated program; that the difference is mainly one of organization and scheduling; that both require definite teaching; and that the same processes of teaching and learning are applicable in the two programs.

As in the earlier book, the main emphasis is on work at the elementary level—kindergarten through grade 8; but it is felt that the principles and processes discussed are equally applicable at the secondary level because growth is continuous, because the same kinds of language experiences face children at both levels, and because the same abilities and skills operate in language activities in elementary and secondary school.

Indebtedness to writers and teachers is apparent throughout the book, and it is specifically acknowledged in many instances. The authors have drawn freely upon the knowledge and experience of colleagues and friends in the profession. Special recognition for contributing samples of children's work should go to the following teachers of the Campus School, State University Teachers College, Potsdam, New York: Miss Beatrice LaVigne, Mrs. Erma Randall, Miss Ella Mae Stiles, Mrs. Ronhild Stillman, Mrs. Tavernier, and Dr. Charles Snyder. Special contributions have been made by Roy O. Hinch, Director of Visual Education, Euclid, Ohio, public schools; Alla Laffin, Director of Public Relations, and Professor Olive Flite, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois; Professor Enoch Dumas, University of California, Berkeley, California; Philip A. Niederauer, Director of Research, Bakersfield, California, city schools; and Dr. Hazel Lambert and Dr. Len Bathurst, Fresno State College, Fresno, California.

*Willard F. Tidyman*  
*Marguerite Butterfield*

# Contents

<i>Preface</i>	v
1. Points of View	1
2. Experiences, Abilities, and Skills	18
3. Oral Communication and Listening	38
4. Written Communication	64
5. Dramatization and Choral Speaking	86
6. Creative Experiences	110
7. Giving Information	139
8. Study and Research	158
9. Attitudes, Courtesies, Content, and Organization	176
10. Vocabulary and Sentences	195
11. Usage and Grammar	218
12. Speech	235
13. Form and Mechanics in Written Work	254
14. Spelling	270
15. Handwriting	288
16. Language in an Integrated Program	308
17. Grade Goals and Sequences	333
18. Planning a Program of Work for a Class	354
19. Principles and Processes	372
<i>Index</i>	399

ping of language content and methodology in the two levels. Most of the principles and procedures suggested are as adaptable to the secondary as to the elementary level.

The over-all plan of the book is quite simple. The first two chapters are general, dealing with basic points of view and types of language content. Chapters 3 through 15 deal with specific phases of a language program. Chapters 3 to 8 consider experience phases, and Chapters 9 to 15, attitude, ability, and skill phases. The treatment of language teaching in Chapters 3 to 15 is adaptable to a systematic, functional program, but applies also to the handling of an integrated program. The integrated program is described more pointedly in Chapter 16. Chapters 17 to 19, like the first two chapters, are general in character, dealing with problems of setting grade goals, planning a program of work for a class, and identifying basic principles of directing learning.

In this chapter we attempt to set up certain points of view that are basic to the establishment of a program of work in language as a whole, including the importance of language in life and in school work, the nature of language and its relation to experience, the development of the child and other factors related to growth in language, the interrelations of the language arts, and the past teaching of language as related to present teaching. In a late section of this chapter, an attempt is made to orient the student to what has been done and is now being done in the teaching of the language arts, so that he may recognize the chief sources of information and may pursue further study in profitable directions. In the final section an overview is provided of the remaining parts of the book.

**The Challenge of Today.** In language, as in other areas of the curriculum, a clue to a modern program is found in current need. Need for communication appeared early in the life of man in conveying immediate needs, in planning a defense against a common enemy, and in transmitting the traditions of the tribe. Language was also a means of controlling social action.

The same needs appear today with increasing clarity and urgency. Furthermore, the performance of complex processes and the use of tools require new vocabularies and more exactness of explanation. Work is becoming more highly specialized, and occupations arise which require refinements in the use of language as a means of giving information and of persuasion, as in the work of a business executive, a salesman, a radio announcer, a teacher. The increasing diversity of interests and occupations of members of the family requires discussion and the resolving of conflicts. New mass media of communication present new patterns of expression, as

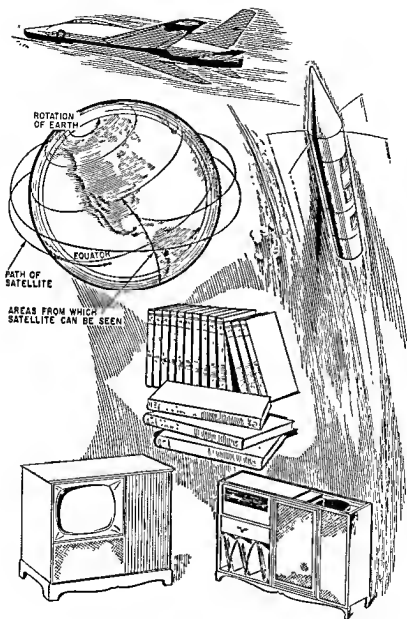


Fig. 1-1. The challenge of today.

well as new ideas. The conflict of national interests results in tensions, often aggravated by the inability to exchange ideas freely. In the process of social evolution, language plays an increasingly heavy role.<sup>1</sup>

**Language in the Development of the Child.** Language is as important to the development of the child as to the development of society. During infancy the expression of desires and satisfactions by gurgling, crying, and arm waving gradually changes to the use of words, phrases, and sentences. Language is a vital factor in resolving the confusion of new experiences and in gaining control of the environment. Continuing into the school years, language serves the same basic functions of adjustment and control, gaining refinement in the process of meeting increasingly complex experiences. Parents and teachers, recognizing the significance of the role of language as a part of the growth process, provide an environment of stimulating experiences and help children to clarify their ideas and to acquire useful, acceptable patterns of expression.

Language is as significant in the emotional development of the child as in his intellectual development. The ready use of language gives a feeling of confidence and helps to establish warm, pleasant relations with parents and playmates. Creative expression is satisfying in itself and often provides an outlet for deep, repressed feelings.<sup>2</sup>

**Language and Thinking.** Emphasis should be given to the close relation between language and thinking. A popular notion is that language is a means of putting ideas into verbal form *after* they are thought out. Actually the very process of putting ideas into words is part of thinking. One acquires understanding by attempting to express ideas; expression clarifies and deepens impression. The often-heard statement, "I know it but I can't find the words for it," is false. What one should say is, "I have a vague idea that I am trying to express, but I can't say it because I don't see it clearly."

Considering language as a vital part of the processes of thinking and learning has profound implications for such areas of teaching as developing vocabulary and in formulating sentences. The approach to vocabulary is through ideas to be expressed, and the approach to formulating sentences is thinking clearly and saying exactly what one wants to say.

**The Nature of Language.** Language is made up of arbitrary verbal symbols that have become associated with ideas and objects through use. Patterns for putting words into sentences are peculiar to a particular language.

<sup>1</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum, *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> I. J. DeBoer, "The Teaching of Communication," *Progressive Education*, October, 1951, 29, 24-25.

This suggests that language is learned primarily by imitation, and that to be clear and acceptable one must use words and patterns of expression which people of the group understand and accept and which have the same meaning for the hearer as for the speaker. There is no difficulty with such concrete words as *dog, horse, chair*; but there may be confusion in the use of such words as *truth, loyalty, justice, democracy, communism*.

The complexity of language is revealed in the many purposes it serves and in the situations in which it is used. Language takes different forms appropriate to the occasions. Thus training in language is training in all the common uses. Moreover, standards of acceptability vary in different social situations, such as informal conversation, making an important address, and community activities—giving rise to the idea that one must learn several forms of language suitable to different occasions. The various social uses of language have something in common, but also have some important differences.

When one turns from the social uses of language to consider what actually makes language effective, one discovers such elements as vocabulary, sentences, speech, writing mechanics, content, willing participation on the part of speaker, and the ability to stick to the point. These elements appear in many social uses, but not with equal importance in all of them. Sticking to the point, for example, is not so important in conversation as it is in discussion and reporting.

Normally growth in language power goes on simultaneously in many of the social uses and in many of the specific elements. The uses and elements are not separable but closely interrelated. The teacher's job is to deal with whole language experiences, such as reporting, discussing, and letter writing, that are closely interrelated but to some extent distinct; and to provide for development in the various language elements that are also interrelated and somewhat distinct. The complexity of setting up an effective program of language instruction is largely caused by the nature of language itself.

**Interrelationships among the Language Arts.** The language arts—oral and written composition, listening, spelling and handwriting, and reading—naturally have much in common. All have a common purpose, the exchange of ideas; and they are concerned with the use of words as symbols, the use of sentences for the expression of complete thoughts, and the organization of ideas into paragraphs and larger units. One art contributes to another, as reading develops vocabulary, sentence forms, types of literary expression, and spelling; and composition contributes to reading and the appreciation of literature. The relation between oral and written composition is particularly close because they require the same general abilities

and skills in such matters as choosing topics, handling content, sticking to the point, varying sentence structure, and using appropriate words. Much punctuation simply indicates in writing the pauses and emphases in speaking.

Certain differences, however, are apparent among the language arts. Reading involves grasping meaning and interpreting ideas; oral and written activities involve giving expression to ideas, thus calling into play quite different, *although related, abilities*. *The mechanics of oral and written expression are distinct*. Spelling and handwriting are clearly tools of written expression.

Customary practice continues to treat the assimilative art of reading and the expressive arts of oral and written language as distinguishable areas in the curriculum. Training in oral and written expression is merging in response to the practical demands of communication as presented by natural language situations. The close, practical relationship between spelling and handwriting and written language is recognized in current programs; but the mastery of distinct, complex skills in handwriting and spelling seems to require separate, systematic treatment at various levels of work.<sup>3</sup>

**Factors Conditioning Language Development.** A teacher must set up a program of language work with a full understanding of the child and the environmental factors that affect the development of language. The child comes to school with well-established habits of expression, especially habits of listening and speaking, determined by the home and community environment from which he springs. These environmental forces continue to operate during the school life of the child, aiding or hindering the teacher in his efforts to bring about improvement. Primarily important, of course, is the home. The mother is the first teacher of language. Patterns of sentence construction, vocabulary, voice quality, pitch of voice, and rhythm of expression are molded by the language the child hears during the first five years. Equally significant are the environmental factors that affect breadth of interest, such as radio, TV, travel, books, art, music, community affairs. The child from a cultured home has much to say on many topics which are foreign to the experience of the less favored child. A friendly, sympathetic, informal home atmosphere invites child participation in conversation and discussion. Overprotective or domineering par-

<sup>3</sup> A. Stier Artley and others, *Interrelationships among the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1954, pp. 3, 34. Also see National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

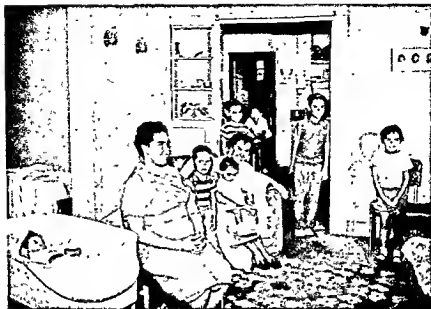


Fig. 1-2. The home environment affects the language development of children. (Courtesy of Tidyman Studios)

ents cause types of withdrawal behavior and may contribute to speech defects such as stuttering. A child from a home where a foreign language is spoken exclusively has less opportunity of hearing and using English, and may acquire unacceptable speech patterns.

The school influences are no less significant. The teacher can provide at least one situation in which the child hears clear, vigorous, idiomatic English; children, particularly younger children, tend to pattern their speech on the example set by the teacher. Also important is making reasonably good language acceptable to the group so that social pressure favors good language.<sup>4</sup>

TV and radio are among the community influences with which parents and teachers must reckon. Some programs stimulate interest in nature, history, and literature and provide a wholesome type of entertainment. Many programs, however, are not suitable for children either as entertainment or as purveyors of moral and social ideals. Improbable adventure, crime, and unreal sentimentality are not a healthy diet for children. Parents

<sup>4</sup> Dorothea McCarthy, *Factors That Influence Language Growth*, National Council of Teachers of English, National Conference on Research in English, Champaign, Ill., 1953.



possibly can bring some influence to bear on children to have them choose the better types of programs; and teachers, instead of ignoring how children spend their leisure time, can talk about and direct children's attention to the better kinds of programs. Teachers and parents may cooperate with advertisers and with broadcasting companies in their efforts to present programs acceptable for children. Just how specifically listening to radio and TV affects children's language is not quite clear. It is certain that these programs provide children with things to talk about. It is possible, also, that children consciously or unconsciously use the language that they hear from a favored TV or radio character. It is unfortunate that poor usage and diction carry such a load of humor.<sup>6</sup>

**Studying a Second Language in the Grades.** Two world wars, with the resulting international entanglements—political, economic, and linguistic—have served to show us how pitifully inadequate we in the United States are with regard to foreign languages. In government and business there is a desperate need for workers trained in a second language, and our ever-increasing tourist exchange is fast making this need a general one. Should we not begin to do something about it in the elementary schools?

Experiments in various parts of the country show that a second language can be an interesting and pleasurable experience for young children. Although a child's speech pattern is fairly well fixed before he starts school, his vocabulary is still comparatively small, and as he takes on foreign words along with new words in English he seems thereby to become more interested in his own language. Moreover, when parents happen to be familiar with the second language under study, they are pleased and cooperative.

Because emphasis is placed on similarities rather than differences between peoples, learning a new language lessens the foreignness of another people, thus broadening the child's outlook and contributing to a spirit of tolerance and understanding so badly needed throughout the world.

O. W. Kopp and C. W. Snyder, in an article, "Experiment in Teaching Russian in Third Grade," *Elementary School Journal*, December, 1957, describe an experiment which Mr. Snyder began in 1948, teaching Spanish to 60 children in the Congdon Campus School, Potsdam, New York. It grew until, by 1957, more than 750 children, including 125 kindergartners, were studying French and Spanish; and one third grade was studying Russian, a language formerly considered too difficult.

In the study of a second language it has been found advisable to teach no words until the child is familiar with the equivalent words and concepts

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

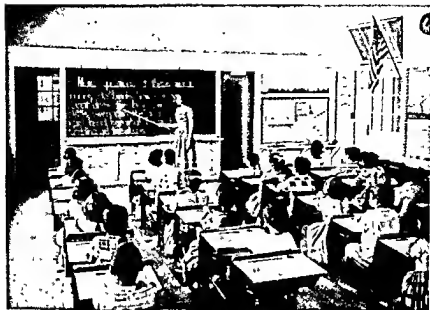


Fig 1-3. Language teaching then. (Courtesy of Tidyman Studios)

in English. There is no attempt to read or write the new language in the primary grades, and grammar is not taught. In French the *le* in front of *crayon* (pencil) and the *la* before *fenêtre* (window) are not questioned until the upper grades, when children begin to write the new language. Games and action words are quickly learned in primary grades.

The question arises, Where do we find teachers prepared to teach foreign languages? And here of course we are caught unprepared. However, one enthusiastic and qualified consultant can provide the necessary assistance to several grade teachers.

The Modern Language Association of America maintains a department devoted to the needs of foreign-language teachers in elementary schools, and is prepared to give assistance.\*

**Language Teaching Then and Now.** In considering a modern program of language teaching, it is necessary to give some attention to how language was taught *in the past*. *Some practices of the past are still followed in the classroom*, although they are no longer acceptable in theory. The teacher and the public tend to accept past methods because they are familiar.

\* Washington Square North, New York 3, N.Y.



Fig. 1-4 Language teaching now. (Courtesy of Congdon Campus School, Potsdam, N.Y.)

Doubtless, isolated examples of vital, vigorous, functional teaching can be found in the past, but the prevailing kind of instruction was characterized by artificiality, formality, and drill. Composition centered in the formal types of narration, exposition, description, and argumentation. The essay was highly favored in the later grades. Little attention was given to the actual uses of language in school and in life, and instruction was predominantly in the written forms. Children were urged to write about impersonal topics such as clouds, trees, spring, birds—topics which carried little personal appeal. Great emphasis was placed on formal grammar, including the memorizing of definitions and rules, parsing, analyzing, diagramming. Formal exercises were the chief reliance in dealing with sentence study, usage, punctuation, and capitalization. In sum, language teaching was isolated from the real experiences of speaking and writing; and learning proceeded in small, isolated drill segments.

The results of the traditional program left children tongue-tied. Many people who have come face to face with the products of the traditional school—businessmen, teachers in upper grades, college instructors—have been very critical. It must be admitted that the general public has been less critical of

thinking, of looking at oneself, of adjusting to social situations, of dealing with reality. The communication program of the school should be conceived imaginatively in terms of this new conception." \* Primary emphasis is placed on real, current language experiences, such as conversation, discussion, reporting, dramatization, letter writing, arising in dynamic classroom situations. Current work in all subjects provides topics to talk and write about and motivation for, as well as practice in, using effective language. Children are encouraged to write about things they know and in which they are interested. Oral language experiences are stressed because oral language is the language of childhood and because oral language provides a basis for writing. Practice is introduced only as it relates to immediate needs in speaking and writing. It is not expected that all children have the same capabilities and needs; individual differences are recognized in communication, in creative work, and especially in practice phases—correct usage, spelling, handwriting, punctuation.

It should be noticed that what we refer to as a modern program of language instruction is not something entirely new. Trends toward the modern program may be observed over a period of years. The modern program is the culmination of a long period of thinking and classroom practices, not a current revolution. Gradual changes can be found in courses of study and textbooks. It is difficult to see how a teacher can use a modern course of study or textbook in language without having some understanding of current trends in language teaching.<sup>2</sup>

**To Teach or Not to Teach Language.** The dissatisfaction of teachers with the traditional program of instruction in language—caused by the antipathy of children to the program and the mediocre results achieved—and the necessity of forming some kind of new program raises the issue, Shall we or shall we not teach language? A natural reaction to the bald formality and unimpressive results of the traditional program is to do away entirely with systematic instruction. It is observed that language training is provided in language experiences growing out of work in other subjects and in out-of-school activities. Children discuss, outline, summarize, and report in the social studies; dramatize in reading and health; extend vocabulary in nature study; and give directions in connection with the playing of games. Language unquestionably is used constantly in all phases of school work. The question is, Does this constant use of language in itself provide for growth and mastery of the basic language abilities and skills? Use in

\* J. J. DeBoer, *op. cit.* Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

<sup>2</sup> J. J. DeBoer, "Earmarks of a Modern Language Arts Program in the Elementary School," *Elementary English*, December, 1954, 31:493.

all areas of the curriculum. It must be recognized as a part of the total curriculum as it is a part of the life of the child outside the school. The implication is that all subjects provide material for speaking and writing, that in all subjects real situations arise which give point and purpose to language activities, and that in all subjects opportunities arise to sharpen language abilities and skills. For language training the values of work in other subjects are potential values only; they become real as the teacher deliberately uses them for training in language.

**Research in the Language Arts.** Currently there is an upsurge of interest in the language arts, probably reflecting a new recognition of the importance of language in modern life and in the development of children, a better understanding of the learning processes, and a growing concern over the inadequacy of traditional methods. Much important research has been done. Complete publishing data for the material following may be found both in footnotes throughout the book and in bibliographical lists at the ends of chapters. The student will be rewarded by going into these resources as far as time permits for confirmation of points of view and for more detailed treatments of topics discussed in the book. Consulting primary sources can be laborious and time-consuming; the student and teacher may prefer to use authoritative summaries, several of which are noted.

For some years leadership in the language arts has been unquestionably taken by the National Council of Teachers of English. In 1945 the council appointed a commission on the teaching of English to reexamine the place language holds in modern life and to review and stimulate research in the field. A five-year program was projected, covering basic principles and work at the several levels, elementary through college. The foundation book of principles, *The English Language Arts*, came out in 1952, and offers a comprehensive and authoritative statement of principles underlying the curriculum. More recently the second and third volumes have appeared, *Language Arts for Today's Children*, 1954, and *The English Language Arts in the Secondary Schools*, 1956. These books deal more specifically than the earlier volume with the work at the elementary and secondary levels. Concurrently, committees of the National Council of Teachers of English have been compiling research material in several specialized areas and have issued several important bulletins: Nila B. Smith and others, *Areas of Research Interest in the Language Arts*, 1952; Dorothea McCarthy and others, *Factors That Influence Language Growth*, 1953; David H. Russell and others, *Child Development and the Language Arts*, 1953; and A. Sterl Artley and others, *Interrelationships among the Language Arts*, 1954.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development brought

out a comprehensive review of recent research studies: Harold G. Shane, *Research Helps in Teaching the Language Arts*, 1955. Emphasis in the bulletin is on practical, day-to-day problems of teaching.

The research of the last five or ten years is an intensification of effort going back much further. In the twenties there was considerable interest in what was regarded as minimum essentials of content in arithmetic, language, social studies, and other subjects. In language, research was concerned with such topics as the frequency of usage errors, grammar relating to errors of usage in speaking and writing, the derivation of objective measuring instruments, grouping of pupils for instruction, and standards for evaluating pupils' work. The results of investigations in the early years were synopsized by R. L. Lyman, *Summary of Investigations Relating to Grammar, Language, and Composition*, 1929. Much of the information noted has not been superseded in more recent investigations, but the conclusions should be reappraised.

Initial impetus toward a modern curriculum of language work was given by the National Council of Teachers of English as early as 1935 in a pilot study of a functional program: W. W. Hatfield, *An Experience Curriculum in English*. A "pattern" curriculum was developed with a basic organization around language experiences and their related "enabling" objectives, abilities, and skills. The basic plan of dividing language work into experience units (social objectives) is still sound in theory and has been generally followed in recent language textbooks. This volume was followed by a second dealing with the language curriculum as an experience curriculum: Angela M. Broening and others, *Conducting Experiences in English*, 1939. An attempt was made to include reports of efforts of teachers throughout the country to put into effect the principles of an experience curriculum. The volume includes many examples of classroom work. A bulletin similar in purpose, reporting the practices of outstanding teachers throughout the country, was written by Jess S. Hudson and others, *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, 1941.

Attention has been given to working out the details of a functional program by the National Society for the Study of Education: M. R. Trabue and others, *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, part II, 1944. It brings together the thinking of ten specialists about various phases of the language program and the place language occupies in the growth and development of children.

Month-by-month reports of research studies and articles on language teaching can be found in several professional magazines: *Elementary English*, *Progressive Education*, *Instructor*, *Childhood Education*, and others.

*Elementary English* is an official journal of the National Council of Teachers of English and contains many articles of value.

Several recent professional books dealing with the language arts, current courses of study locally available, and recent textbooks for children are worth examining.

## EXERCISES

1. List the characteristics of an older program of language instruction from your experience as a pupil or teacher, and compare them with some of the characteristics of a modern program.
2. Observe children in or out of school and report language patterns.
3. Note individual differences in language abilities and attempt to explain them in terms of conditioning factors.
4. Report observed changes in the language development of children from age to age and explain the nature and causes of changes.
5. What are the effects of radio and TV on children's language?
6. What are the new requirements of a language program geared to the needs of life today?

## REFERENCES

- Applegate, Mauree: *Helping Children Write*, Row, Peterson & Company, Evanston, Ill., 1954, chap. 1.
- Artley, A. Sierl, and others: *Interrelationships among the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1954.
- Broening, Angela M., and others: *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, pp. 3-8.
- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, chap. 1.
- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chap. 1.
- : *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, chap. 1.
- and Marian Zollinger: *Guiding Language Learning*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chaps. 1-2.
- Developing Children's Power of Self-expression through Writing*, Board of Education, City of New York, 1952, chap. 1.
- Goodrich, Bessie B.: *The Language Program in Grades One and Two*, Charles E. Merrill Company, New York, 1936, pp. 1-7.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, chaps. 1-2, pp. v-x.
- Herrick, Virgil E., and Leland B. Jacobs: *Children and the Language Arts*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955, chap. 1, pp. 435-438.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twen-

- tieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941.
- Lee, J. Murray, and Dorris M. Lee: *The Child and His Curriculum*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1950, pp. 351-356.
- Lyman, R. L.: *Summary of Investigations Relating to Grammar, Language, and Composition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1929, chap. 2.
- McCarthy, Dorothea, and others: *Factors That Influence Language Growth*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1953.
- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, chap. 1.
- National Council of Teachers of English. Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, chap. 1, pp. 179-186, 326-327.
- : *The English Language Arts in the Secondary Schools*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1956.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, chap. 1, pp. 324, 345-353.
- Russell, David H., and others: *Child Development and the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1953, pp. 6-9, 22-25, 27-34, 41-52.
- Shane, Harold G.: *Research Helps in Teaching the Language Arts*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Washington, 1955.
- Smith, Nila B., and others: *Areas of Research Interest in the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1952, pp. 3-7.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *Guide for Teaching English Is Our Language, Grades 1-2*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1950.
- : *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, chaps. 1-3.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 6-11, 77, 222.



## Experiences, Abilities, and Skills

An effective program of instruction in the language arts must be planned; it cannot be left to chance. The school must utilize or contrive situations in which language is needed for specific immediate purposes and must plan to manage the situations in such a way that real growth in language power takes place.<sup>1</sup>

A first step in planning is identifying the important lines of language growth and analyzing the lines of growth into specific elements that can be dealt with effectively. The task is a difficult one because language serves a variety of purposes in many social situations such as entertaining guests, introducing friends, enjoying a TV program, persuading others to accept policies or programs; because language takes many different forms appropriate to different situations such as reporting, outlining, discussing, dramatizing; and because language is a complex of many interrelated abilities and skills such as capitalizing proper nouns, using commas in a series, selecting topics for reporting, planning an organization of ideas in reporting. Any attempt at analysis and classification of the various components of a language program is likely to be somewhat arbitrary, and may tend to distort the true picture of language as a closely knit body of experiences, abilities, and skills, operating as a whole in achieving social purposes. Nevertheless an analysis and a classification must be attempted.

In this chapter we shall seek to identify the chief components of a

<sup>1</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, *Commission on the English Curriculum, The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, p. 35.

language program and to combine them into significant related groups for further study. We shall be concerned with such matters as the identification of important experiences, the consideration of the place of each experience in the total program and in the development of children, and a listing of some of the more important elements in each experience. The chapter provides an overview of the total language program.

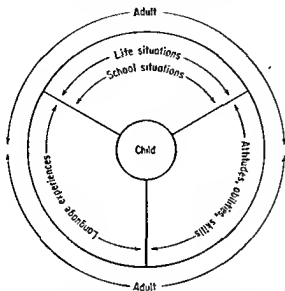


Fig. 2-1. Components of a language program.

**Goals in Modern Education.** It may help in the analysis of language goals to note similar types of goals in other areas of the curriculum. Modern education has adopted a functional point of view, as opposed to an earlier disciplinary concept. The modern view is the substitution of real, lifelike learning experiences for much drill on isolated elements or skills. In vocal music, for example, emphasis is placed on rote singing and on listening, rather than on training in sight reading. In instrumental music, children from the beginning participate in a complete musical experience—the playing of a selection—rather than in practice of scales. In industrial arts, pupils early begin on projects and the making of real objects. Skills of sawing, hammering, sanding, and finishing are learned largely through use. In the social studies, work centers on problems, rather than on events, dates, and places. In the area of health education, physiology is giving way to a study of practices of healthful living. In all these areas it should be noted that facts, skills, and abilities are needed and that provision is made

## Experiences, Abilities, and Skills

An effective program of instruction in the language arts must be planned; it cannot be left to chance. The school must utilize or contrive situations in which language is needed for specific immediate purposes and must plan to manage the situations in such a way that real growth in language power takes place.<sup>1</sup>

A first step in planning is identifying the important lines of language growth and analyzing the lines of growth into specific elements that can be dealt with effectively. The task is a difficult one because language serves a variety of purposes in many social situations such as entertaining guests, introducing friends, enjoying a TV program, persuading others to accept policies or programs; because language takes many different forms appropriate to different situations such as reporting, outlining, discussing, dramatizing; and because language is a complex of many interrelated abilities and skills such as capitalizing proper nouns, using commas in a series, selecting topics for reporting, planning an organization of ideas in reporting. Any attempt at analysis and classification of the various components of a language program is likely to be somewhat arbitrary, and may tend to distort the true picture of language as a closely knit body of experiences, abilities, and skills, operating as a whole in achieving social purposes. Nevertheless an analysis and a classification must be attempted.

In this chapter we shall seek to identify the chief components of a

<sup>1</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, *Commission on the English Curriculum, The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, p. 35.  
18

also, the child learns to understand ideas through words spoken by another, as well as to express ideas.

Gradually childhood experiences broaden in contacts with people—with playmates, with visiting friends, with strangers—and these situations place new demands on communication. Maturation of mental and physical powers makes increasingly mature forms of communication possible. There is much use of questions, What is that? Children want to know *how* the television operates, and *why* they cannot play with other children. There is much listening to commands, directions, and explanations. The language of the preschool child is oral—through speaking and listening—although the four-year-old may begin to show an interest in printed words and in writing.

School years bring changes in language requirements. There is reporting in *show and tell*. There is discussion in planning for the making of a playhouse. Children must listen to and respond to the teacher's questions. Children ask parents for information needed at school. Dramatization and dramatic play are frequently directed or structured. As children plan and work together in small groups, conversation and discussion are necessary. There are invitations to be written to parents. The class may make a chart of duties or record experiences on a field trip.

In later grades there are needs for reading and note taking, outlining and summarizing, creative writing of stories and poems, using a dictionary, and listening to guest speakers.

In life and in school the service function of language must be recognized: It is the means of accomplishing ends, usually ends relating to other people and therefore social. The forms that language takes are determined by the social purposes it serves, and the goals of performance set in school work should be those that are useful in life situations.

The modern school program of language work recognizes the social uses of language not only as the ultimate goals but also as the immediate goals. For example, the school equips the child for adult participation in conversation by giving him real experiences in conversation. This is a modern functional point of view in language corresponding to the functional points of view in social studies, in music, in industrial arts—in fact, in all other areas of school work.

**Factors or Elements in Language Experiences.** Proficiency in using language is gained in part through real language experiences—conversation, reporting, letter writing, and listening—where the attention of the child is fixed almost wholly on a total experience and on a social purpose. But

There is a clear difference between such factors as pronouncing or spelling a word and such elements as selecting an appropriate topic for a story or sticking to a point in discussion. The last two elements depend on knowledge, understanding, and judgment. There are principles that apply, but no rules. Practice is required for mastery, but it is practice in thinking. Because knowledge, understanding, and judgment predominate in such elements as selecting appropriate topics and sticking to a point we refer to these elements as *language abilities*. They are similar to such elements of football as knowing whether to pass or run, what play to call, and how to defend against a particular formation of opponents.

A third set of factors or elements operating in language experiences can be distinguished—the factors that relate to attitudes, desires, values, and standards of quality. An eight-year-old boy not noted for his serious attention to school work was observed writing a letter at home. It was the spring of the year, and interest in baseball was mounting. He was struggling with a letter to a mail-order house requesting a ball, a bat, and a glove. He was concerned about the form of the letter, the spelling, the legibility of the handwriting; about stating clearly what he wanted, determining the exact amount of money to enclose, and giving the return address. Apparent was a desire to write a letter, growing out of a real social situation. Obviously, attitudes toward language work are key factors in language development. They provide motivation that triggers study and practice, and this motivation grows out of various social situations in and out of school. Successful learning through language experiences requires the acceptance of appropriate standards in the skill and ability elements.

We have observed that knowledge and understanding are involved in various phases of language work. This is particularly true in dealing with language abilities. The knowledge-understanding-judgment factors operate in phases where no fixed rules of procedure apply, where choices can be made, where principles are invoked. Examples where understanding operates are sticking to a point (as we have mentioned), deciding on a thought sequence, using an inverted sentence structure for emphasis, deciding what details to include in a report, preparing an outline, and the like. Understanding is also called into play in some of the mechanical phases of the work, as in the use of punctuation marks and in manuscript preparation. Grammar is essentially a vehicle for understanding the structure of language, designed to secure clarity, vigor, and correctness of expression. Learning why certain mechanics are used and the purposes they serve in speaking and in writing adds interest to often dull phases of work and facilitates con-

learning is often facilitated by giving special attention to the factors or elements that condition the way the child talks, reports, dramatizes, and writes letters. It is now necessary to identify the kinds of elements.

Perhaps the identity of the language elements can be made clear by noting similar elements in another familiar activity, such as playing a game. In football, for example, the real experience is actually playing the game. Athletes have occasion to pass and catch the ball, punt, tackle, evade the opponents by dodging or straight-arming, run interference, call plays, and the like. Skills are recognized at once as important elements or factors affecting the way boys play the game. But there are also judgment factors, such as calling plays and deciding whether to pass or run. Other factors, more intangible, concern the attitude of the players such as the will to win, good sportsmanship, and team morale. In developing teams coaches take steps to develop the basic skills—"fundamentals"; to develop understanding of the principles of the game, as strategy in playing various positions; and to build the desire to win and to play fairly. A very large part of the training time is devoted to work on skills and on principles of playing the game. Good football teams are made not by scrimmage only, nor by instruction on how to play the game and by drill on mere fundamentals, but by a judicious combination of the experiences of playing a game and of practice on elements or factors.

As in football, the analysis of language work reveals various elements that affect performance. In writing a story, the child selects an appropriate topic, plans a sequence of incidents, uses appropriate words and phrases, spells and writes, and forms sentences that express ideas clearly and emphasize important ideas. In planning and carrying through an informal dramatization, a child or group of children selects a suitable topic such as a story; reads the story to get the main sequence of events; lists characters and parts; outlines the scenes; puts the ideas for each scene into appropriate words; plans the costuming and stage business; performs; and with the help of classmates evaluates the performance. Similar analyses of elements can be made for any language experience.

The skill elements in language are apparent. In speaking we find pronunciation, enunciation, voice projection, phrasing, sentence structure, and usage. In written work we find capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing, usage, sentences, handwriting, and spelling. Many skill elements are determined by rule or by convention. Proficiency requires repetition or practice. There is a minimum of freedom of choice or thinking. The skill elements of language correspond roughly to the skill elements of football.

trol and retention. The trend to teaching mechanics less "mechanically" and more meaningfully should be encouraged in current language instruction as in other curriculum areas.

In sum, real experiences and the elements of attitudes, abilities, and skills are the phases of language in which growth takes place and which must be considered in planning a total language program.

**Scope and Grouping of Factors.** Having established the point that language experiences constitute an important part of the total language program, it is now necessary to consider *what* language experiences should be included in the program. They should be those useful to the child and to the adult outside the school, and to the child in school, incident to various

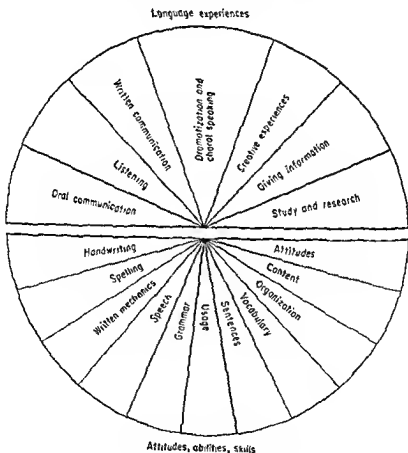


Fig. 2-2. Language experiences and attitudes, abilities, and skills are interrelated.

for the enjoyment of imaginative literature. It has value for all children, but a particular value for the child with a gift for literary expression.

Creative work, as a distinct kind of language experience, takes the form of story, verse, play, or article. Much creative effort will come as an outgrowth of work in other subjects, particularly social studies and literature.

*Giving Information.* This places a special emphasis on accuracy, clarity, completeness, and conciseness of expression. Information can be given in oral or written form, depending on the situation and the maturity of the pupils, but the desired qualities are the same in both forms. Specific experiences vary considerably in frequency of use and importance, depending in part on the school program, curricular and extracurricular. The most common types are expository talks, reports, explanations, and directions; of less frequent use are announcements, advertisements, minutes of meetings, introductions, interviews, and filling in of forms. Situations in which most of these experiences have an immediate purpose will arise in school. All these experiences will have frequent or occasional use in life, depending on an individual's activities.

*Study and Research Experiences.* Included in this group are miscellaneous experiences commonly occurring in various phases of the curricular program. The chief types of study and research experiences are records, charts, problems, questions, lists, outlines, summaries, indexes, bibliographies, and dictionary work. The experience chart is commonly used in the earliest grades as a means of summarizing observations on field trips and discussions of topics in social studies, health, and nature study. The completed chart provides interesting reading material as well as a summary and record of important facts. It is true that the preparation of the chart is largely teacher-directed; nevertheless, the children contribute ideas, formulate key sentences, and consider the orderly sequence of sentences in the paragraph. The children, therefore, face the problem of formulating clear, orderly expression, and they thereby gain some understanding of the simple elements of composition. Early in the grades opportunities also appear for using charts and records of a different type—the tabulation of selected facts in a concise, orderly form. Thus, children prepare lists of materials needed to carry on an activity; a list of individual duties in working on an activity or in performing classroom chores; or a chart record of observations of the weather, of birds, or of flowers. Dictionary work appears at about the third-grade level in the form of checking the meaning, pronunciation, and spelling of words. Preliminary to that, the children may prepare their own alphabetical lists of words, encountered primarily in reading and language



*Written Communication.* Written communication, which is similar to oral communication in purpose, appears as one of the early, natural experiences of children and continues in importance throughout the grades. The first written communications are dictated to the teacher by the pupils. Later, when the child has acquired the skills of handwriting and spelling and when occasion demands, he writes letters, invitations, acceptances, and thank-you notes. Friendly letters predominate, but in modern programs many occasions also arise in which the business letter has a place. Letter writing requires the learning of various conventions and the observance of courtesies, as well as the clear expression of ideas and the exercise of various other abilities and skills.

*Dramatization and Choral Speaking.* Dramatization has an important place in the life of the child, both in his spontaneous play and in directed school activities. It is valuable in itself and also as a means of developing important language abilities and skills. It has a variety of important uses in school, vitalizing the social studies, health lessons, and reading; but probably dramatization is most useful as a means of developing an understanding and appreciation of literature, for it is far more appealing than traditional analysis and criticism.

Choral speaking, consisting of group reading or reciting of carefully chosen literary selections, usually verse, has value as a means of enjoying literature. Properly handled, children love it. It is also promoted at times as a means of bringing about improvements in certain elements of speech, such as voice control, pronunciation, and enunciation. It provides an opportunity for language participation to the shy child who naturally shrinks from individual performance in which he is the center of attention.

In dramatization and choral speaking and other phases of the language program such as creative work, the language program draws upon the rich resources of children's literature.

*Creative Experiences.* Some authorities and teachers regard creative work as the basis of the language program; others regard it as a valuable supplement—another kind of activity. If by creative work is meant expressing one's own thought and feeling, then certainly all work should be creative. If, on the other hand, creative work refers to a kind of expression that is highly imaginative, emphasizing feelings and emotions, employing many figures of speech and striving for especially vivid words and phrases, then creative work seems to take its place as a distinct activity. Creative work in the latter sense provides an emotional outlet, stimulates the imagination, broadens the vocabulary, and, through efforts at production, lays a basis

Key courtesies that contribute to pleasant and effective discourse are attentive listening, the giving and taking of criticisms objectively, and amiability of manner. It should be recalled that attentive listening is more than giving passive attention to the speaker and even more than avoiding inconsiderate interruptions; it involves active thought about what the speaker is saying and an attempt to follow, understand, interpret and evaluate. Continuing the line of thought by comment or question is evidence of good listening. Other courtesies can be distinguished and possibly set up with profit as goals for socially mature pupils: avoiding rude remarks, exhibiting tactful disagreement, knowing when and where to talk, avoiding unpleasant topics and personalities, appreciating good humor, respecting authority, and expressing approval of good work.

*Content.* There is general agreement that, after attitudes, content is most important in any consideration of language teaching. The change from the mechanical to the functional concept of language teaching places primary emphasis on saying something. Real communication is weighed in terms of ideas, and the school to be realistic must give a similar emphasis to the meat of the composition. The necessity of making a worthy contribution provides the leverage for dealing with the *means* for making a worthy contribution—the abilities and skills that contribute to clarity, force, and beauty of expression.

Important factors that contribute to good content are a suitable topic, interesting details, complete treatment, originality in expressing thoughts and feelings, and ability to distinguish between the real and the make-believe. A topic is good when it lies within the child's experience and interest, is limited to a specific phase of a subject, and provides opportunity for expressing original thoughts and feelings. The other factors vary in significance with the language experience and the maturity of the children.

*Organization.* Organization, closely related to content, contributes clarity and force to expression. It concerns ordering sentences in a paragraph and planning a sequence among paragraphs in larger compositions. Among the important specific abilities in organization are unity in sticking to the point, logical sequence, good beginning and ending sentences, and proper paragraphing.

*Vocabulary.* Language development is characterized by growth in range, variety, and selectivity in the use of words. Children and adults find pleasure in hearing apt, well-chosen, expressive, vivid words; and they enjoy using them. But ideas and feelings precede words. The basis for word study is found in expanding experience and in a growing desire for clear, vivid

study, thus acquiring some of the basic understandings and skills of alphabetical arrangement.

In the later grades, as study becomes more independent, some of the more mature study-research abilities and skills appear. In connection with the handling of a topic in social studies, children are encouraged to formulate large problems and key questions, to prepare a logical study guide of topics or questions, and to outline and summarize material on a given topic from a variety of sources. A long report—class, group, or individual—may require a table of contents or an index for the convenient locating of material and the identification of sources of information by the use of proper bibliographical references.

It should be observed that study and research experiences call into play certain general language abilities, such as clearness, conciseness, and orderliness of expression; and also that specific skills are needed.

*Attitudes.* We now turn to the categories of attitudes, abilities, and skills, noting some of the specific goals in each category and considering the relation of these goals to the total language program, particularly to experiences. Authorities agree that willingness to participate in language experiences is a basic condition of learning. Participation should not be forced; situations and conditions must be created that will catch children's interests. The desire and willingness to speak and write constitute the dynamics of all language work.

Closely related to interest is the desire to improve in the quality of performance. Desire to improve leads to self-evaluation and responsiveness to criticisms and suggestions and to the discipline of training exercises on abilities and skills. The school must combat environmental influences that tolerate, if not encourage, slovenly and inept speech.

*Courtesies.* Language is essentially a social activity, and due regard for the thoughts and feelings of others is a consideration in many types of communication. Courtesies are the social amenities that characterize people of culture and good taste; they are also the means of cultivating pleasant social relationships. Courtesy is not confined to the use of polite forms; it represents and expresses a feeling of sincere friendliness and respect for others. Two aspects of courtesy are apparent—feeling and form. Rudeness may be due to a lack of sensitivity to the feelings of others or to thoughtlessness or ignorance of correct behavior. It may be due also to self-consciousness. Desire for social approval is an effective motive for courtesy, particularly in the middle and later teens; knowledge of correct social behavior gives a sense of security.

ble to the demands of modern life for a direct, vigorous, idiomatic form of expression. The standards of formal, pedantic correctness persist primarily in the classroom. Usage by good speakers and writers is the criterion of acceptability, but conservative grammarians continue to set up rules, and teachers continue to set up exercises, which are consistently violated by good speakers and writers and by the teachers themselves. Acceptability rests on usage, not on rules of grammar; and oral language is the language that provides patterns of acceptability.<sup>4</sup> Through usage it is acceptable to say, *I've absolutely got to go; I don't know if I can; It is me.*<sup>5</sup>

There are, it is recognized, certain crudities of language which are an offense to the ear, if not an obstruction to meaning, as *I done it; I brung it*. They are not generally acceptable. Fortunately the crudities are not numerous; according to Charters, 40 per cent of all "errors" made by children are in the forms of fifteen common verbs, chiefly the confusion of the simple past with the past participle of *see, come, run, write, begin, break, drink, lie, do, go, give, take, ring, sing, sit.*<sup>6</sup>

In the second place it is recognized that usage is relative to the situation. The same expression may be appropriate on one occasion, but inappropriate on another. In greeting, a person may say, *Hi; Howdy; How do you do; I am pleased to meet you*. The choice of expression should fit the occasion. Speech may vary from the extremely formal to the extremely informal within the limits of propriety. There are various levels of acceptability, not only one level.<sup>7</sup> Colloquial speech is appropriate where natural and informal situations are present, in conversation and letter writing. Formal speech is appropriate in talks and reports.

It should be pointed out, in the third place, that patterns of usage vary in communities, and that efforts to raise the children far above the standards of the social group may be futile and even harmful.<sup>8</sup>

In conclusion it may be said that the usage program should concentrate on a relatively few serious crudities, determined in part by the standards

<sup>4</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum, *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, pp. 275-277.

<sup>5</sup> A. H. Marckwardt and Fred Walcott, *Facts about English Usage*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1938, pp. 27-31.

<sup>6</sup> M. R. Trabue and others, *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, p. 87.

<sup>7</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum, *The English Language Arts*, pp. 277-279.

<sup>8</sup> Trabue and others, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

be recognized by the teacher. For example, frequent errors of pronunciation are:<sup>15</sup>

1. Incorrect vowel quality: frequently heard in such words as *get, was, pretty, catch, because, creek, just*.
2. Incorrect consonant quality: frequently heard in *length, what, luxury, immediately, walking, talking*.
3. Misplaced accent: *positively, research, museum, umbrella, discharge*.
4. Omission of requisite sounds: as in *recognize, family, really, mirror, nearer, February*.
5. Sounding of silent letters: in such words as *often, toward, evening, parliament, salmon, corps*.
6. The addition of superfluous sounds: as in *athlete, mischievous, once, prairie, film, portentous, elm*.
7. The utterance of sounds in their improper order: frequently heard in *children* (not *childern*) *hundred, larynx*.

Some of the difficulties in articulation are the *s* lisp; *t* for *k*; *d* for *g*, *th*, *r*, *l*; *w* for *wh*; and *in* for *ing*.<sup>16</sup>

There remain to be considered the children who have marked speech deficiencies, conspicuously serious, such as stammering and stuttering. The handling of these problems requires special knowledge and training; but the general teacher can acquire some understanding of the basic causes of difficulty and at least avoid contributing to the children's difficulty.

*Form and Mechanics in Written Work.* The basic language habits of construction and use are established in oral work. If oral work is well handled, difficulties in written work will be reduced to a minimum; if not, deficiencies in oral training will appear in glaring form in written work. In addition, in written language there are problems relating to mechanics of capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing, manuscript form, and neatness. (Spelling and handwriting are treated in later chapters.)

## EXERCISES

1. Distinguish clearly the several kinds of language goals and show how they are related to each other. Give original examples.
2. By what various means do children express their thoughts and feelings?
3. List real uses of language by children and adults. Attempt a logical grouping.
4. What factors or elements in children's oral and written work seem to distinguish good work from poor work?

<sup>15</sup> M. R. Trabue and others, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

<sup>16</sup> Paul McKee, *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, p. 318.

writing a report on the westward movement, a child wrote, "Farmers in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas were driven out of their homes by dust, and they moved west to find better living conditions." After more careful consideration he changed the statement to "Because farmers in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas were driven from their homes by dust, they moved west to find better living conditions." The revised statement shows more clearly the relations of the facts and expresses them more vividly.

Concepts of functional grammar *may* be useful in detecting and correcting "errors." Thus a child who had fallen out of a swing said, "I didn't hurt myself very bad, but it was bad enough." The teacher led the child to see that when he spoke of hurting himself he should use the word *badly*, an adverb, and suggested a revision of the statement: "I didn't hurt myself very badly, but badly enough."

In acquiring grammatical concepts and principles in these ways, the child improves his expression and at the same time builds up a vocabulary of terms and a body of principles that are useful in writing, and in reading. There is no formal learning of definitions and no formal memorization of principles. Grammar is learned as needed in use. In a very real sense, *this* is functional grammar.

Just what concepts and principles of grammar are useful in improving the clear, vivid, accurate expression of ideas will appear to the teacher as he works with the children of a particular class.<sup>11</sup>

*Speech.* Attention to speech derives its importance from the dominance of oral communication. Speech training is a means of improving oral communication and, more profoundly, a means of giving the child a feeling of confidence in establishing social relations. Good speech habits are factors in personality development. It hardly needs to be reiterated that speech work is subordinate to the expression of content ideas and that it is best handled in relation to purposeful expressional situations.

The teacher is concerned with the 90 per cent of his pupils who need some training in speech as a means of effectively expressing ideas and emotions, as well as with those pupils having serious speech defects. Desirable goals are audibility; distinctness of enunciation; accurate pronunciation; voice control in volume, pitch, quality, and melody; a delivery that is easy, natural, and free from distracting mannerisms; and audience contact.

The needs of children are largely local and individual in character, and the teacher should set up standards and goals in terms of the needs of his pupils. However, some difficulties are general in character and should so

<sup>11</sup> R. D. Cain, "Grammar's Not Terminology," *English Journal*, April, 1958, 47:200-205.

- Poolcy, R. C.: *Teaching English Usage*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1946, chap. 1, pp. 177-182.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *Guide for Teaching English Is Our Language, Grades 1-2*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1950, chap. 5.
- : *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, pp. 139-154, 183-194, 316-328.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 6-21, 87-91, 146, 164-168, 219-221.

5. Examine a course of study or textbook and report the different kinds of language goals found there.
6. What colloquial expressions are found in your community? Are they generally acceptable?
7. Give an original example of the functional use of grammar.
8. Make a list of (a) experiences and (b) attitudes, abilities, and skills for several grades, using as your authority the observation of children, a course of study, or a textbook. Compare results by grades.

## REFERENCES

- Bailey, Matilda, and others: *Language Learnings, K-2*, American Book Company, New York, 1956.
- Broening, Angela M., and others: *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, pp. 236-242.
- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, pp. 5-10.
- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, pp. 25-27.
- : *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, chap. 3.
- and Frieda H. Dingee: *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 8, 19-23.
- and Marian Zollinger: *Guiding Language Learning*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chap. 3.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, chaps. 12, 18.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp. 243-252.
- Lee, J. Murray, and Dorris M. Lee: *The Child and His Curriculum*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1950, pp. 356-366, 417-420.
- Lyman, R. L.: *Summary of Investigations Relating to Grammar, Language, and Composition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1929, pp. 5-49, 71-133.
- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, chaps. 1 and 5.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, chap. 3, pp. 13-15.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 103-107, 113-133, 209-249.
- Ogilvie, Mardel: *Speech in the Elementary School*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1954, chap. 1.
- Pooley, R. C.: *Teaching English Grammar*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1957.



- Poolcy, R. C.: *Teaching English Usage*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1946, chap. 1, pp. 177-182.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *Guide for Teaching English Is Our Language, Grades 1-2*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1950, chap. 5.
- : *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, pp. 139-154, 183-194, 316-328.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 6-21, 87-91, 146, 164-168, 219-221.

5. Examine a course of study or textbook and report the different kinds of language goals found there.
6. What colloquial expressions are found in your community? Are they generally acceptable?
7. Give an original example of the functional use of grammar.
8. Make a list of (a) experiences and (b) attitudes, abilities, and skills for several grades, using as your authority the observation of children, a course of study, or a textbook. Compare results by grades.

## REFERENCES

- Bailey, Matilda, and others. *Language Learnings, K-2*, American Book Company, New York, 1956.
- Broening, Angela M., and others. *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, pp. 236-242.
- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, pp. 5-10.
- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, pp. 25-27.
- . *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, chap. 3.
- and Frieda H. Dingee: *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 8, 19-23.
- and Marian Zollinger: *Guiding Language Learning*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chap. 3.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, chaps. 12, 18.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp. 243-252.
- Lee, J. Murray, and Dorris M. Lee: *The Child and His Curriculum*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1950, pp. 356-366, 417-420.
- Lyman, R. L.: *Summary of Investigations Relating to Grammar, Language, and Composition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1929, pp. 5-49, 71-133.
- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, chaps. 1 and 5.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, chap. 3, pp. 13-15.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 103-107, 113-133, 209-249.
- Ogilvie, Mardel: *Speech in the Elementary School*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1954, chap. 1.
- Pooley, R. C.: *Teaching English Grammar*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1957.

- Pooley, R. C.: *Teaching English Usage*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1946, chap. 1, pp. 177-182.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *Guide for Teaching English Is Our Language, Grades 1-2*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1950, chap. 5.
- : *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, pp. 139-154, 183-194, 316-328.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 6-21, 87-91, 146, 164-168, 219-221.

## Oral Communication and Listening

Preliminary to making detailed plans for handling the instructional phases of the language program, it is assumed that the teacher has taken certain steps. First, he has selected the language experiences to be stressed in the grade according to the apparent needs of the pupils and the course of study and textbook provisions, and he has considered relative importance. Second, he has made a working list of abilities and skills needed by the pupils in carrying on the experiences. Third, he has made at least a beginning in the diagnosis of the needs of his pupils in experiences as well as in abilities and skills. And fourth, he has blocked out the semester's work mainly in terms of major experiences.

At this point the teacher is ready to develop his program by making plans for handling the various instructional phases. The program includes both experience phases and ability and skill phases; both require consideration and planning. The primary basis for planning is, of course, experiences; abilities and skills are treated as integral parts of the experiences and as separate phases to the extent that organized instruction and practice are required for mastering them.

The first experiences to be considered are those included in the group "oral communication," consisting of conversation, discussion, telephoning, and meetings. Oral-communication experiences are taken up first because fundamental oral abilities are well developed by the time the child enters school, because oral work is the basic medium of instruction in the early

years, and because (and this is a point that may not receive the attention it deserves) habits of oral communication lay the basis for all later language development. Listening is treated as a phase of oral communication.

The oral communication experiences are characterized by informality and spontaneity. The objectives are the social purposes of enjoyment, exchanging ideas, giving information, and, to some extent, reaching a conclusion or deciding on a course for group action. Informality and spontaneity are encouraged in the spirit and manner of carrying on the experiences and in the setting of standards appropriate to them. It is not required, for example, that children use complete sentences in conversation at all times; and some slang is acceptable.

The several experiences have much in common and also have important differences which the teacher will do well to note. Thus, conversation is very general in purpose; the entertainment feature dominates. Discussion, on the other hand, has a more definite goal and follows more rigid requirements in setting up and carrying out problems. Telephoning is sometimes handled as a specialized phase of conversation, but it has its own language requirements. Meetings involve several kinds of language experience, such as talks, reports, discussion, and written minutes, as well as those especially relating to parliamentary procedures and courtesy; meetings are treated here with emphasis on the discussion phase, while the other component language phases will be treated in later chapters.

## CONVERSATION

**Objectives.** The first language experience in school is the informal type which we call conversation. The child learns how to talk with other people and begins the improvement of basic language habits. It follows, therefore, that through early school-life conversation the child may be favorably conditioned toward language, and that he should begin to acquire the attitudes, abilities, and skills that will be useful later in all forms of expression, oral and written.

Primarily important is the desire, the willingness, to participate. Shyness, fear of expressing himself orally before others, must give way to confidence and poise before the pupil can accomplish much in improving abilities and skills that lead to easy and comfortable expression.

Little Patricia was timid, shy, self-effacing. Her first attempt to share in the conversation occurred when, in a high, sing-song voice she announced one morning, "Last night we had pork chops and my sister came

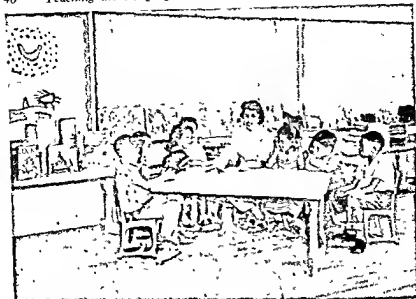


Fig 3-1. Children converse freely and naturally about matters of common interest. (Courtesy of Tidyman Studios)

down with the baby." This was a far cry from a complete statement, yet to Patricia it was important. Questions were asked to encourage Patricia to feel that she had made an important contribution: "Did you have mashed potatoes with the pork chops?" "How old is your sister's baby?" "What is the baby's name?" The word *nephew* was introduced, since the baby was Patricia's nephew.

A shy child was showing a little spool doll which she had made. "I made this doll while I was at home sick with a cold," she said. To the children's comments—"That's cute!" "How did you make it?" "Why did you make the hair blue?"—the child was obliged to reply. She had to tell how she made the doll and justify the blue hair. In so doing she felt important and forgot her shyness.

Somewhat later in development is the desire to improve in quality of expression and the willingness to admit need as well as to seek help in correcting mistakes. This development comes gradually under favorable classroom conditions.

Courtesy is closely related to willingness to participate; the attentive, friendly class and teacher stimulate the speaker. The courteous speaker

does not offend or alienate his audience. The courteous critic offers suggestions in a constructive, friendly manner. The courteous listener not only keeps quiet but also follows the thought of the speaker and shows his attention and interest by asking stimulating questions and making pertinent comments.

Primary emphasis in the early years is properly placed on what is said—on content. The teacher can aid the pupil in forming a habit of saying something worthwhile by helping him select a topic within his interest, knowledge, and experience. Children need training in choosing good topics—such as those which provide opportunities for expressing personal feelings—and in avoiding catalogues of events and the trivial and sensational. Another consideration in choosing topics is limiting them in scope to a single phase—a single experience, incident, idea, or feeling. Sheridan says the good topic is “personal, definite, and brief.” At times conversation will be improved by inclusion of details, so that the whole story is told. In the primary grades children tend to follow patterns in their comments and talks, and at times confuse fiction and reality; therefore, teachers wisely advise children to express their own thoughts and to distinguish between the real and the make-believe.

Emphasis on sticking to the point may well begin early in the grades, although gradual growth is recognized as a necessity. Primary children can give attention to simple sequence by telling things in the order in which they occurred. Later, some attention can be given to improving beginning and ending sentences.

The idea that communication involves the expression of a complete thought is one of the basic language concepts, and the development of the sentence sense is properly stressed. Although many incomplete sentences are used in informal conversation, complete sentences are conventional in more formal situations, such as talks and reports. Children should early recognize and use sentences; they should be taught to avoid meaningless phrases and sentences loosely joined by ands. The more mature pupils in the primary grades can learn to use a variety of sentence constructions. They can also make a beginning in learning to choose words that express meaning exactly and to avoid trite, overworked words.

The basic elements of audibility, distinctness, correct pronunciation, voice control, and possibly phases of audience contact can be emphasized in the primary grades. Baby talk is a not uncommon phenomenon that should be corrected by removing the cause.

Usage should not be emphasized to the detriment of content, but work

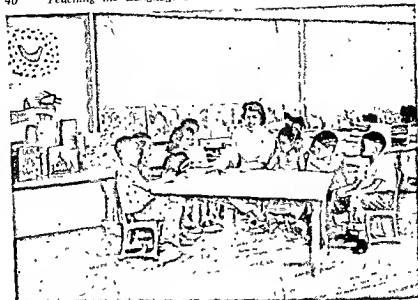


Fig. 3-1. Children converse freely and naturally about matters of common interest. (Courtesy of Tidyman Studios)

down with the baby." This was a far cry from a complete statement, yet to Patricia it was important. Questions were asked to encourage Patricia to feel that she had made an important contribution: "Did you have mashed potatoes with the pork chops?" "How old is your sister's baby?" "What is the baby's name?" The word *nephew* was introduced, since the baby was Patricia's nephew.

A shy child was showing a little spool doll which she had made. "I made this doll while I was at home sick with a cold," she said. To the children's comments—"That's cute!" "How did you make it?" "Why did you make the hair blue?"—the child was obliged to reply. She had to tell how she made the doll and justify the blue hair. In so doing she felt important and forgot her shyness.

Somewhat later in development is the desire to improve in quality of expression and the willingness to admit need as well as to seek help in correcting mistakes. This development comes gradually under favorable classroom conditions.

Courtesy is closely related to willingness to participate; the attentive, friendly class and teacher stimulate the speaker. The courteous speaker



does not offend or alienate his audience. The courteous critic offers suggestions in a constructive, friendly manner. The courteous listener not only keeps quiet but also follows the thought of the speaker and shows his attention and interest by asking stimulating questions and making pertinent comments.

Primary emphasis in the early years is properly placed on what is said—on content. The teacher can aid the pupil in forming a habit of saying something worthwhile by helping him select a topic within his interest, knowledge, and experience. Children need training in choosing good topics—such as those which provide opportunities for expressing personal feelings—and in avoiding catalogues of events and the trivial and sensational. Another consideration in choosing topics is limiting them in scope to a single phase—a single experience, incident, idea, or feeling. Sheridan says the good topic is “personal, definite, and brief.” At times conversation will be improved by inclusion of details, so that the whole story is told. In the primary grades children tend to follow patterns in their comments and talks, and at times confuse fiction and reality; therefore, teachers wisely advise children to express their own thoughts and to distinguish between the real and the make-believe.

Emphasis on sticking to the point may well begin early in the grades, although gradual growth is recognized as a necessity. Primary children can give attention to simple sequence by telling things in the order in which they occurred. Later, some attention can be given to improving beginning and ending sentences.

The idea that communication involves the expression of a complete thought is one of the basic language concepts, and the development of the sentence sense is properly stressed. Although many incomplete sentences are used in informal conversation, complete sentences are conventional in more formal situations, such as talks and reports. Children should early recognize and use sentences; they should be taught to avoid meaningless phrases and sentences loosely joined by ands. The more mature pupils in the primary grades can learn to use a variety of sentence constructions. They can also make a beginning in learning to choose words that express meaning exactly and to avoid trite, overworked words.

The basic elements of audibility, distinctness, correct pronunciation, voice control, and possibly phases of audience contact can be emphasized in the primary grades. Baby talk is a not uncommon phenomenon and should be corrected by removing the cause.

Usage should not be emphasized to the detriment of content, but a-

on gross crudities may well begin early, particularly on the use of common verbs. The child should have many opportunities to hear the correct form, and occasionally incidental correction can be used.<sup>1</sup>

The teachers of later grades will naturally locate children in their various stages of development and will begin instruction at the proper level. Individual differences will be noted at all grade levels and the necessary adjustments made. Specific techniques for later development may include talking about pleasant things; avoiding long, tedious accounts; avoiding personalities; avoiding a change of topics too abruptly; avoiding debates; and talking in terms of other people's interests.

*Emphasis on Specific Objectives* Although any language experience involves the exercise of many abilities and skills, not all of them can be stressed at one time. It is necessary to set up specific points of emphasis. In discussing the need for specific rather than general objectives, Brown and Butterfield say: <sup>2</sup>

Instead of specific language aims, such general aims as the following are often given:

1. Ability to converse easily, agreeably, and effectively.
2. Ability to present facts clearly.
3. Habit of expressing ideas in clear, ready speech.
4. Ability to express one's thoughts orally to an audience.
5. Ability to respond effectively to an inquiry.

Any such general aims may, of course, be factored into a number of specific aims. If the primary teacher makes no further analysis of the language teaching situation than that she wants the children to improve in conversation, or that she hopes they may learn to express their thoughts orally to an audience, there will probably be little improvement. Without greater focusing of attention she is not able to plan definite procedures which will make for progress. Her plan is vague, and her efforts are spread over too broad a field.

In order to insure progress in such a complex subject as language, the teacher should single out for attention one or more specific aims and plan each lesson with a definite aim in mind.

If he has not already done so, the teacher may well make a check list of general and specific language goals and make an analysis of the status and specific needs of his class and of individual pupils in relation to the broad language experience. The individual-class record sheet is helpful in this task. Diagnosis takes the form of observations and informal judg-

<sup>1</sup> R. M. Thomas, *Ways of Teaching in the Elementary School*, Longmans, Green & Co., Inc., New York, 1955, p. 228.

<sup>2</sup> Dorothy L. Brown and Marguerite Butterfield, *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, p. 9. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

ments of pupils' performances. The teacher must make a selection of specific goals from the analysis, using his best judgment in regard to needs and order of treatment. In the statement of objectives above, an attempt was made to suggest an order of emphasis. The wide variability in pupil capacity and performance requires that individual goals, as well as class goals, be defined. Children should recognize their own needs, possibly making individual check lists. Recognition of specific, individual needs will be apparent in the way the teacher directs the work and in the concentration of the pupils on specific goals.

**Finding Purposeful Occasions.** Children have so many experiences in and out of school and they enjoy so much the sharing of real experiences that the teacher should never be at a loss for stimulating topics of conversation. Many of these will arise in connection with various curricular activities, such as the care of the teeth, a study of how pioneers made clothes, the reading of items in current newspapers and magazines, field trips, flowers and birds, books, pictures, and music. Others will arise from children's out-of-school interests, such as hobbies, movies, pets, sports, and occurrences in the community. In addition to real experiences, interesting possibilities for later grades are found in imaginary conversations among historical and fictional characters, such as between tourist and guide in Holland, among representatives of various colonies attending the Constitutional Convention, and among representatives of countries in a United Nations assembly.

**Materials.** Most of the material suitable for stimulating conversation will appear naturally as phases of work in other subjects and in school and community activities, as suggested by the topics above.<sup>3</sup> In certain situations, such as in working with children beginning to learn English, objects and pictures will provide a basis for vocabulary work and will stimulate conversation; but even these will be chosen for their value as sources of information in important curricular areas, particularly the social studies and nature study. The modern language textbooks, especially those for the primary grades, contain pictures for conversation. Pictures are used not only to provide topics but also to direct children in developing certain language abilities. For example, in McKee and Harrison's second-grade book, *Let's Talk*, a series of pictures represents narrative episodes in logical sequence, designed to develop the idea of organization.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Althea Beery, "Experience: the Source of Communication," *Childhood Education*, February, 1931, 27:278-281.

<sup>4</sup> Paul McKee and M. Lucile Harrison, *Let's Talk*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1936, pp. 20-21.

on gross crudities may well begin early, particularly on the use of common verbs. The child should have many opportunities to hear the correct form, and occasionally incidental correction can be used.<sup>1</sup>

The teachers of later grades will naturally locate children in their various stages of development and will begin instruction at the proper level. Individual differences will be noted at all grade levels and the necessary adjustments made. Specific techniques for later development may include talking about pleasant things; avoiding long, tedious accounts; avoiding personalities; avoiding a change of topics too abruptly; avoiding debates; and talking in terms of other people's interests.

*Emphasis on Specific Objectives.* Although any language experience involves the exercise of many abilities and skills, not all of them can be stressed at one time. It is necessary to set up specific points of emphasis. In discussing the need for specific rather than general objectives, Brown and Butterfield say:<sup>2</sup>

Instead of specific language aims, such general aims as the following are often given:

1. Ability to converse easily, agreeably, and effectively.
2. Ability to present facts clearly.
3. Habit of expressing ideas in clear, ready speech.
4. Ability to express one's thoughts orally to an audience.
5. Ability to respond effectively to an inquiry.

Any such general aims may, of course, be factored into a number of specific aims. If the primary teacher makes no further analysis of the language teaching situation than that she wants the children to improve in conversation, or that she hopes they may learn to express their thoughts orally to an audience, there will probably be little improvement. Without greater focusing of attention she is not able to plan definite procedures which will make for progress. Her plan is vague, and her efforts are spread over too broad a field.

In order to insure progress in such a complex subject as language, the teacher should single out for attention one or more specific aims and plan each lesson with a definite aim in mind.

If he has not already done so, the teacher may well make a check list of general and specific language goals and make an analysis of the status and specific needs of his class and of individual pupils in relation to the broad language experience. The individual-class record sheet is helpful in this task. Diagnosis takes the form of observations and informal judg-

<sup>1</sup> R. M. Thomas, *Ways of Teaching in the Elementary School*, Longmans, Green & Co., Inc., New York, 1955, p. 228.

<sup>2</sup> Dorothy L. Brown and Marguerite Butterfield, *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, p. 9. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

ments of pupils' performances. The teacher must make a selection of specific goals from the analysis, using his best judgment in regard to needs and order of treatment. In the statement of objectives above, an attempt was made to suggest an order of emphasis. The wide variability in pupil capacity and performance requires that individual goals, as well as class goals, be defined. Children should recognize their own needs, possibly making individual check lists. Recognition of specific, individual needs will be apparent in the way the teacher directs the work and in the concentration of the pupils on specific goals.

**Finding Purposeful Occasions.** Children have so many experiences in and out of school and they enjoy so much the sharing of real experiences that the teacher should never be at a loss for stimulating topics of conversation. Many of these will arise in connection with various curricular activities, such as the care of the teeth, a study of how pioneers made clothes, the reading of items in current newspapers and magazines, field trips, flowers and birds, books, pictures, and music. Others will arise from children's out-of-school interests, such as hobbies, movies, pets, sports, and occurrences in the community. In addition to real experiences, interesting possibilities for later grades are found in imaginary conversations among historical and fictional characters, such as between tourist and guide in Holland, among representatives of various colonies attending the Constitutional Convention, and among representatives of countries in a United Nations assembly.

**Materials.** Most of the material suitable for stimulating conversation will appear naturally as phases of work in other subjects and in school and community activities, as suggested by the topics above.<sup>3</sup> In certain situations, such as in working with children beginning to learn English, objects and pictures will provide a basis for vocabulary work and will stimulate conversation; but even these will be chosen for their value as sources of information in important curricular areas, particularly the social studies and nature study. The modern language textbooks, especially those for the primary grades, contain pictures for conversation. Pictures are used not only to provide topics but also to direct children in developing certain language abilities. For example, in McKee and Harrison's second-grade book, *Let's Talk*, a series of pictures represents narrative episodes in logical sequence, designed to develop the idea of organization.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Althea Beery, "Experience: the Source of Communication," *Childhood Education*, February, 1951, 27:278-281.

<sup>4</sup> Paul McKee and M. Lucile Harrison, *Let's Talk*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1956, pp. 20-21.

**Processes in Conversation.** A suitable procedure for handling conversation experiences, in either a single lesson or in a series of lessons, is the following.<sup>5</sup>

1. Set up a present, worthy occasion.
2. Encourage informal participation.
3. As the period progresses, call attention to the effective contributions, and list some of the important standards.
4. Have each child select an important goal for himself.
5. Take time to prepare for further participation.
6. Proceed with the experience, evaluating each child's performance in terms of achievement toward his own goals.

The present, worthy occasion is one naturally arising in some phase of the work, as suggested above under the headings Finding Purposeful Occasions, and Materials, or one especially set up by the teacher for the purpose of inducing conversation. The teacher may relate a personal experience; for example, he may tell about the unusual behavior of a squirrel which he saw that morning, and ask, "Have any of you had similar experiences in observing the interesting and unusual behavior of animals?" Another topic may be a recent assembly program: "Did you," asks the teacher, "enjoy the program? What did you like about it?" The show-and-tell period in the primary grades is productive of spontaneous talk. "Plans for the Summer" is a pertinent topic as the vacation period approaches.

Hatfield, in the preceding reference, suggests that children should be permitted to engage in the language experience at once, without preliminary instruction in goals, ways, and means. As the conversation period progresses and as interest builds up, the time arrives when attention may be momentarily diverted from subject matter to ways of carrying on the conversation. It will be observed by the pupils that some contributions are better than others. Points appropriate to the grade and maturity of the pupils are then discussed and possibly listed on the board. The teacher uses his discretion in guiding the children to choose a few key points of major importance. The enjoyment of the experience for its own sake is not to be lost in overconcern with technicalities. Properly handled, the instructional phase will add to, rather than detract from, the enjoyment and satisfaction pupils derive from good performance.<sup>6</sup>

It may be assumed that work on conversation will continue for some time, in either consecutive or discrete periods. The listing of general goals

<sup>5</sup> W. W. Hatfield, *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, pp. 135-136.

<sup>6</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, *Commission on the English Curriculum, The English Language Arts*, Appleton Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, p. 310.

in the early phases of the work will be followed by analyzing individual contributions and by noting individual goals for improvement. In preparation for participation and in the experience itself children will profit from concentrating on their individual goals. The caution regarding the limitation of the number of goals for any one child is worth repeating. Efforts toward improvement and evidence of improvement should be looked for and rewarded with favorable comment and possibly with checking on a record sheet. Improvement in total performance, not simply in a single ability or skill, should be observed; participation should not become merely a practice exercise for the development of skills and abilities.

The teacher will exercise judgment in the nature and amount of running comments and suggestions for improvement. Occasionally a timely suggestion, when an immediate need is felt, is very helpful. Generally, children should not be interrupted; at the conclusion of a contribution, specific suggestions for improvement may be in order, such as the correct pronunciation of a common word or the correction of a gross crudity of usage. Possibly having a word or correct form repeated by the child or by the class will not detract from the free exchange of ideas. The nature and amount of incidental practice will be determined in considerable part by the temperament of the individual child and class.

In the report of the lesson that follows, some good points are illustrated: selecting a topic of interest to the children, sticking to the point, and allowing only one person to talk at a time. The lesson is reported by Vera L. White, third grade, Del Paso Heights, California.

A flood at Yuba City provided an opportunity to begin a unit on water transportation by means of an informal conversation lesson. One little boy during a sharing period told the class that his father had been at Yuba City to help rescue people. The conversation started from this story.

JOHN: My dad offered to go up and help save some of those people. A man called him on the phone and told him to get someone else to go with him, so he did.

DAVID: Was he a life saver in the coast guard?

JOHN: Well, he used to be, but he isn't now. He just wanted to help.

KAREN: Did he go right up to the houses and get the people out?

JOHN: Yes, because many people were on top of their tables and even on top of their houses trying to get saved.

TEACHER: Were any other kinds of boats used in the flood?

JOHN: My dad said they used some kind of rubber boat that was used in the last war.

FRANK: What kind of boat did your dad have?

JOHN: He had a motor boat. It has a motor on the back that is run by gas. It has a thing that goes round and round and it makes the boat go.

IUDIE Did your dad get wet?

JOHN: Sure, but he didn't care.

TEACHER Did anyone else go to see the flood? Was anything else used to save those people?

PATRICIA The helicopters worked all day and night. My mother said some people fell out of the baskets when they were being rescued.

TEACHER: That is right. Some of the helicopters did not have good baskets to pull the people up in. Connie just came from Hawaii a few days ago. Would you like to tell us how you came across the ocean?

CONNIE: I didn't come on a boat. I came on an airplane.

CHILDREN. Was it fun? Were you scared? How long did it take you? I would like to do that, etc.

TEACHER. We are all talking at once, and we decided that it was better for only one person to talk at a time. (Connie was very new to the class and did not want to answer all of their questions.)

TEACHER: Let's listen to some other pupils who have been in boats.

FREDDIE. I came from England in a big ship. I was quite little but it was a great big ship.

HOWARD: I rode along the Sacramento River in a boat they called—I can't remember the name of it.

FRANK: Was it a yacht?

HOWARD: Yes, that's what they called it. It had a cabin in it. It drug another boat behind it.

TEACHER: We are going to have a good time in learning about the many kinds of boats that are used in transporting people and goods across the water.

TEACHER: I liked the way you boys and girls talked today. I am sure that everyone heard you. Should we make a list of the things you would like to learn about boats? Let's use complete sentences that say only one thing, so that we can make our meaning clear.

**Other Problems.** Other problems confront the teacher in handling conversation. It is desirable, in the first place, to work for an informal type of situation. In order to get free expression, it is necessary to reduce self-consciousness. This condition is achieved largely by the attitude assumed and by the handling of the work by the teacher, and includes such matters as suitable topics, freedom in pupil choice of topics and in participation, friendly and helpful criticisms, and expressions of appreciation. The seating of the pupils in a compact, social group is a factor also; the children should face one another, and the teacher should participate as a member of the group. Contributing from a sitting position adds to the informality.<sup>7</sup>

Stimulating the shy child and tactfully restraining the garrulous one present problems. Timid children appreciate and respond to attention and

<sup>7</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, *Commission on the English Curriculum, Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, p. 125.



approval. The teacher will encourage the shy child by inviting participation but not by forcing it. The garrulous child may be restrained by suggesting that everyone should have his turn, by neglecting to notice imperious hand waving, and by advising the child to be brief and to the point.

In one primary grade it was the practice several times a week to invite any child who wanted to take part in conversation to bring his chair and join the group at the front of the room. The teacher gave the signal by arranging several chairs in the morning. As the children came in and observed the chair arrangement, they knew it meant a conversation period, and anyone who wanted to tell something joined the group. Others took books or busied themselves otherwise. It was an adult situation. No hands were raised, but each child strove to be courteous, to be a good listener, and to speak plainly, concisely, and interestingly.

In the general sharing and pooling of ideas during an informal conversation period, shy children who will not talk from the isolation of their seats will usually contribute; voices do not have to be raised, and the pupils feel a sense of protection from the physical nearness of the other children. The loquacious child has to learn that he must listen or he cannot join the group. In this situation the teacher may get very close to the children and learn much about the interests of the group; recurring crudities of usage may be easily noted, and sometimes gross bits of misinformation are brought to light and explained.

The judicious use of criticism by the teacher is effective. Approval of worthy effort is also always in order; such approval does not necessarily have to be for superior levels only, but for any work that is good for a particular pupil. The heartiness of the approval should be adapted to the temperament of the particular child. At times, ignoring obvious faults is necessary to avoid hurting and discouraging an extremely shy child. The value of class criticism is open to question. Group approval is a vital force in classroom behavior, but the offering of discriminating criticism is something that challenges even the mature and wise teacher. Some teachers feel that children, particularly in the primary grades, are not ready for that responsibility. When such critical comment is permitted, children should be inducted gradually into its use; it should be definitely limited in scope. Other teachers report favorable results from the use of some class criticisms. Observing the effects of class criticism on a particular class should give the teacher the answer.

For various reasons, the class is sometimes divided into several small groups for conversation. These groups provide opportunities for general participation, which, however, cannot be closely guided; and they simplify

the social situation for the shy child. Teacher direction may be given to group work by preliminary discussions and by reports in a checkup period following group work. Sometimes selected groups demonstrate for the whole class.

## DISCUSSION

**Definition.** Discussion unquestionably occupies a key position in the total school program, as well as a prominent place in adult activities. It is a means for learning in much of the work in social studies, nature study, health, arithmetic, and art, and in school and life activities. Discussion in essence is problem solving, the effort to reach an important understanding by cooperative class thinking. Discussion differs from conversation in that it has a definite purpose or goal. The goal in much of the work is apparent to the pupils as well as to the teacher. In the so-called informal discussion of the primary grades, the goal is apparent to the teacher but possibly not so apparent to the pupils. The procedure is a combination of conversation and the more rigid procedure of discussion. This type of discussion is transitional or hybrid. Children need guidance in the processes of reason-

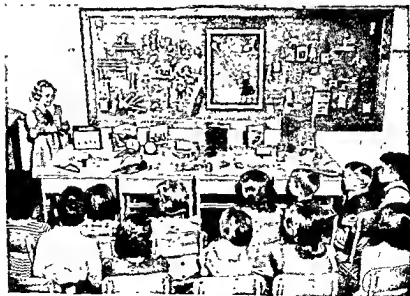


Fig 3-2 Science provides problems for discussion. (Courtesy of Laboratory School, Fresno State College, Fresno, Calif.)

ing, and they need direct, positive help in setting up problems and in working out logical solutions. Appropriate situations and problems arise in many activities of the school day.\*

Discussion should be distinguished from argument. In discussion the goal is the honest attainment of knowledge; in arguing, the purpose is to defend a position or conclusion already reached by the participant. Discussion should lead to new and better understanding; arguing merely strengthens the convictions of the participants in the soundness of their own original positions. In discussion there is an open-minded search for all the facts; in argument, facts not supporting a favored position are carefully ignored.

**Key Objectives.** The general language objectives apply in discussion as in conversation and other language activities. These objectives are basic and important, and provide the teacher with possible points of attack and emphasis. They are reviewed above under Conversation, but omitted here to save space. It will suffice here to consider the key objectives which distinguish discussion from conversation, in emphasis if not in kind. The clue to distinguishing the key objectives in discussion is found in its purpose, i.e., arriving at a sound understanding or conclusion.

In the first place, there must be a definite problem before the class. Setting the problem will be the responsibility of the teacher in the lower grades; but progressively through the grades, the pupils will assume responsibility and gain some ability in setting up specific problem goals for discussion. The problem may require exact definition. A second matter for emphasis is sticking to the point. A certain amount of freedom to change the topic in conversation is permissible, and even desirable, because it adds variety and novelty. In discussion, however, diverging from the point is a waste of time; sticking to the point has purpose and value because it provides opportunity for acquiring an important ability in thinking and speaking. The third point concerns tactful disagreement. Differences of opinion are bound to occur—concerning facts, the interpretation of facts, and the drawing of conclusions. An attitude of trying to see the other person's point of view and of toleration for a different point of view should be cultivated in all situations involving disagreements. The form as well as the spirit of expressing disagreements is important. In discussion, in the fourth place, there should be respect for authority. Pupils need to discriminate between sources and to respect the statements and conclu-

\* M. R. Trabue and others, *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, p. 64.

defeat the dual purposes of learning something and of developing the techniques and habits of *orderly, democratic group* behavior. Setting up an organization after the pattern of adult organizations and using adult procedures tend to lend dignity and preserve order. But the teacher at times may have to perform the functions of a firm but friendly moderator.

Implied in the discussion above is the idea that the class will work as a unit. However, discussion groups and other subdivisions such as round tables, panels, and forums may be used to advantage. These variations will appeal to pupils and teachers in the upper grades because they add variety and training in adult procedures.

### *Example of Discussion, Grade 5 or 6\**

#### *Situation*

Time has been lost by pupils wandering from the point in the discussion of problems in the social studies. The class is a superior class, accustomed to participate freely in discussions and to take responsibility for leadership. The teacher previously has developed the idea of sticking to the point and has directed class practice lessons. This lesson is a follow-up.

#### *Objective*

To improve ability to stick to the point in class discussions.

#### *Preparation*

The teacher wrote on the board three problems growing out of the study of Mexico:

1. Why are the Mexicans poor now when they once had many rich mines?
2. How has the United States helped Mexico?
3. What is Mexico doing for her people today?

The teacher appointed a capable child to act as a discussion leader on each of the three problems. A research period was given, during which each child learned something about each problem.

#### *Procedure*

1. If possible, a circle is formed, so that everyone can see and hear each member of the group.
2. The teacher announces the discussion lesson and has the pupils recall the need for sticking to the point.
3. The discussion leader of problem 1 announces his problem and begins the discussion by commenting on it or by telling a few of the facts about it. He asks whether there is something that can be added or whether there is a question. He has been instructed previously to try to bring everyone into the discussion and to pick up the discussion when it drags. The leader must not

\* Contributed by Miss Sadie Irwin, Fresno city schools, Fresno, Calif.

interrupt unless members are getting away from the topic. The leader can use various procedures to bring the class back to the problem, such as:

- a. Ask the speaker or the class whether the discussion is on the topic.
  - b. Reread the topic under discussion.
  - c. Ask any member of the group to rise to a point of order when a speaker wanders from the topic.
  - d. Encourage any member of the group when in doubt to ask whether the speaker is sticking to the point.
  - e. Enter the discussion at the first opportunity and by comments or questions bring the speaker or the class back to the topic.
  - f. Keep a running memorandum on the board of the points made.
4. When the discussion of the first problem has been concluded, the problem is restated by the leader and a conclusion as to whether it was properly solved is drawn by the class.
  5. Through the guidance of the leader, there is a group evaluation of the class improvement in sticking to the point.
  6. The two remaining problems are handled in the same way, improvement in sticking to the point being noted at the conclusion of the discussion of each problem.

#### *Follow-up*

The class is divided into four or five groups, and each group prepares and engages in a group discussion of a topic, giving special attention to sticking to the point. The teacher moves from group to group, advising and guiding as need arises.

### TELEPHONING

Telephoning, of course, is not an experience common to school life. We generally train pupils for the use of the telephone in the home rather than in the school.

**Specific Objectives.** Training pupils in use of the telephone provides opportunities for the cultivation of certain desirable social attitudes and understandings and for the development of important abilities and skills. They include the following:

1. Formulate the message or inquiry concisely before making the call.
2. Give your name and state the purpose of the call.
3. Identify yourself in answering a call.
4. *Speak clearly and distinctly.*

The use of a party line poses problems of courtesy. A person makes sure that the line is clear before making a call, and he hangs up promptly when he finds the line in use.

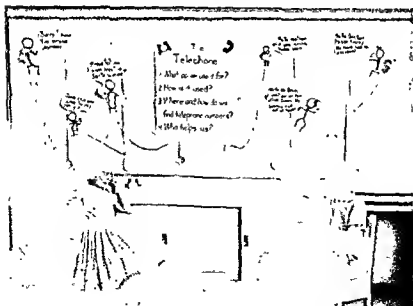
## *Teaching the Language Arts*

Speech and language objectives include brevity, pointedness, speaking distinctly and slowly, and using a well-modulated tone of voice. In addition, certain other specific techniques must be learned: using the directory to find numbers, getting central or dialing, care of the instrument and its hygienic use, and making out-of-town calls.

**Situations.** Since situations in telephoning are generally situations outside the school, the situation that is set up for learning in the school is usually a recalled or imaginary situation, adapted to the level of maturity of the pupils. The situations represent social uses and include:

1. Calling mother to see whether one can visit a friend
2. Receiving a message for some other member of the family
3. Making an emergency call to a doctor
4. Reporting a fire
5. Ordering groceries
6. Extending an invitation
7. Expressing thanks for a favor

**Processes.** The processes are similar to those for other types of oral communication but require certain modifications. First, the occasion for using the telephone may be created by recalling the uses of the telephone



in the home or possibly by setting up a situation where a pupil must make a particular call for himself or for the class. Second, opportunity for discussion is provided, adapted to the particular purpose and to the grade level. In the discussion, a toy telephone is useful for study and demonstration. Listing steps of procedure may help. Third, selected pupils may carry on typical, imaginary conversations before the class. Fourth, there should be evaluation of specific points by the class. This demonstration and practice work continues. As a follow-up, the pupils may make calls at home and report experiences to the class, noting good and bad practices. Especially bad practices may be highlighted by dramatization or monologue. A representative of the telephone company may explain and demonstrate, or the class may take a trip to the telephone exchange. Thus, discussion, demonstration, dramatization, and reporting are the basic procedures of instruction.

## MEETINGS

Meetings have a place, even if not a prominent one, in the school life of children and, of course, in adult life as well. Training in organized group behavior not only contributes to the effectiveness of the children's voluntary, cooperative enterprises but also sets up situations in which there is a definite and immediate need for certain types of social behavior and language abilities. The training received in meeting techniques should carry over into other types of group situations involving discussion.

**Specific Objectives.** Pupil participation in meetings gives point and emphasis to many of the language abilities and skills, particularly those of discussion, and in addition involves certain parliamentary procedures. Specific social objectives in the latter area include gaining the attention of and addressing the chairman, making a motion, discussing a motion, seconding a motion, amending a motion, calling for a vote to end unduly prolonged debate, voting, choosing officers, presiding, acting as secretary or treasurer, presenting reports, observing order of business, delaying action for further consideration, and adjourning.

Specific language and speech techniques concern such matters as having a point and sticking to it, speaking at the proper time, giving convincing reasons for a proposal, organizing ideas and presenting them with clarity and directness, proposing tactful disagreement, avoiding personalities, and speaking clearly and forcefully.

**Situations.** Situations should be natural ones growing out of the organized activities of the children, including class, student council, and club

Speech and language objectives include brevity, pointedness, speaking distinctly and slowly, and using a well-modulated tone of voice. In addition, certain other specific techniques must be learned: using the directory to find numbers, getting central or dialing, care of the instrument and its hygienic use, and making out-of-town calls.

**Situations.** Since situations in telephoning are generally situations outside the school, the situation that is set up for learning in the school is usually a recalled or imaginary situation, adapted to the level of maturity of the pupils. The situations represent social uses and include:

1. Calling mother to see whether one can visit a friend
2. Receiving a message for some other member of the family
3. Making an emergency call to a doctor
4. Reporting a fire
5. Ordering groceries
6. Extending an invitation
7. Expressing thanks for a favor

**Processes.** The processes are similar to those for other types of oral communication but require certain modifications. First, the occasion for using the telephone may be created by recalling the uses of the telephone

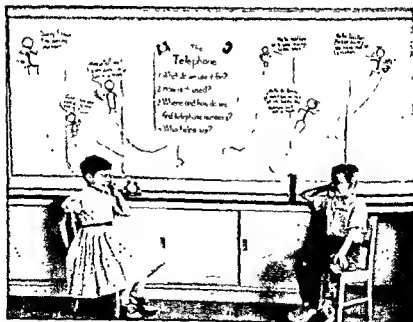


Fig. 3-3. We use the telephone for various purposes. (Courtesy of Len Bathurst)



in the home or possibly by setting up a situation where a pupil must make a particular call for himself or for the class. Second, opportunity for discussion is provided, adapted to the particular purpose and to the grade level. In the discussion, a toy telephone is useful for study and demonstration. Listing steps of procedure may help. Third, selected pupils may carry on typical, imaginary conversations before the class. Fourth, there should be evaluation of specific points by the class. This demonstration and practice work continues. As a follow-up, the pupils may make calls at home and report experiences to the class, noting good and bad practices. Especially bad practices may be highlighted by dramatization or monologue. A representative of the telephone company may explain and demonstrate, or the class may take a trip to the telephone exchange. Thus, discussion, demonstration, dramatization, and reporting are the basic procedures of instruction.

## MEETINGS

Meetings have a place, even if not a prominent one, in the school life of children and, of course, in adult life as well. Training in organized group behavior not only contributes to the effectiveness of the children's voluntary, cooperative enterprises but also sets up situations in which there is a definite and immediate need for certain types of social behavior and language abilities. The training received in meeting techniques should carry over into other types of group situations involving discussion.

**Specific Objectives.** Pupil participation in meetings gives point and emphasis to many of the language abilities and skills, particularly those of discussion, and in addition involves certain parliamentary procedures. Specific social objectives in the latter area include gaining the attention of and addressing the chairman, making a motion, discussing a motion, seconding a motion, amending a motion, calling for a vote to end unduly prolonged debate, voting, choosing officers, presiding, acting as secretary or treasurer, presenting reports, observing order of business, delaying action for further consideration, and adjourning.

Specific language and speech techniques concern such matters as having a point and sticking to it, speaking at the proper time, giving convincing reasons for a proposal, organizing ideas and presenting them with clarity and directness, proposing tactful disagreement, avoiding personalities, and speaking clearly and forcefully.

**Situations.** Situations should be natural ones growing out of the organized activities of the children, including class, student council, and club

meetings. Need and desire for improved handling of the activities provide the motives for the language lesson.

**Processes.** The general procedure for directing oral communication experiences applies very well to the handling of meetings. The occasion, of course, is provided by some school activity. Participation follows immediately; or if the teacher feels that it is necessary, he leads in a preliminary consideration of organization and procedure. If the meeting proceeds in an effective, orderly manner, the pupils are allowed to continue without interruption. Otherwise, time is taken out for providing the needed instruction and guidance. Children should be thoroughly conscious of the immediate purpose—which is to secure well-planned, reasoned action—and of the value of learning useful parliamentary procedures. They should experience the satisfaction of, and gain confidence from, noting and checking progress in both areas. They should bear responsibility in proportion to their maturity and capabilities.

A third grade organized a book club and then nominated and elected the following officers: president, vice-president, and secretary. The pupils decided that the duty of the secretary was to write down the title of each book reported, its author, and the name of the child reporting it. This information was later printed on a large chart which hung on the wall and was used by the group as a reference when the pupils wanted to draw books from the library. The club met every Tuesday for one-half hour. The following is a stenographic report of a part of the fourth meeting:

**PRESIDENT** (*After taking her place at the front of the room*): The Book Club will now open. How many have books to report? Neil, do you want to report first?

**NEIL** (*Coming to front of room*): I read a book, *Cinder the Cat*. The author is Miriam Blanton Huber. There are seven chapters. The story's quite good, I think. It's about a cat.

**PRESIDENT**: Are there any questions?

**CHILD**: Is it real interesting?

**NEIL**: I thought so.

**CHILD**: Are the pictures colored?

**NEIL**: Yes, black and yellow. They're quite good.

**CHILD**: Is it a true story?

**NEIL**: No.

**CHILD**: Is it easy to read?

**NEIL**: Yes.

**PRESIDENT**: How many would like this book on our list?

(*The majority votes for it and the secretary records it.*)

**PRESIDENT**: Who else has a book to report? Jack!

**JACK** (*Coming to front of room*): I read a story about Teeny Weeny Town.

I can't remember the name of the author, but I'll bring it tomorrow. It's about what they make their stuff out of.

CHILD: What stuff?

JACK: Well, the top of the ketchup bottle was used for a washtub. The characters are a dunce, a policeman, a Chinaman—

CHILD (Interrupting): Aw, that comes in the paper. It's a comic.

PRESIDENT: Any questions?

CHILD: Did you get it at the public library?

JACK: Yes. It's not a comic.

CHILD: Are the pictures colored?

JACK: Some of them.

CHILD: Is it hard to read?

JACK: Yes, for me. Maybe some of you could read it better.

(Class votes this book on the list.)

PRESIDENT: Grant, do you want to report?

GRANT: I read two books. One was *Old Mother West Wind*. It's about Old Mother West Wind and all her people—Reddy Fox, Johnny Chuck, Jimmy Skunk, Billy Mink, and all of them. They all get into mischief. They're all the little people of the forest. Jimmy Skunk steals eggs (*chuckles*) and that's funny. The author is Thornton W. Burgess. It's very exciting at the end.

PRESIDENT: Are there any questions?

CHILD: Is it hard to read?

GRANT: No.

CHILD: Did you get it from the shelf?

GRANT: Yes.

CHILD: Are there pictures?

GRANT: Yes, black and white, and they're on slippery paper.

PRESIDENT: How many want that book on the list?

(Majority votes for it.)

GRANT: My other book was *Our Farm Babies* by a man named Hamer. It tells all about farm animals and their babies. Tells how they're first born and all about them. The boy's name is Johnny. He lives at the farm too.

PRESIDENT: Questions?

CHILD: Is it true?

GRANT: It could be.

CHILD: Are there pictures?

GRANT: Yes.

CHILD: Is it hard to read?

GRANT: No, not very.

PRESIDENT: Do you want that book on the list?

(Majority wants it.)

These reports were, of course, very immature, but the children were struggling with the problem of telling something about the story without telling the story itself, which is something of a problem even for adults. Their experience with chapter books had been very limited. They had only

a few stock questions, and replies in some cases were given without much thought. There were few inquiries about content. It was, however, the children's own club, and they were very serious about it. They ran it themselves, and even the slowest readers were interested and reported easy books from time to time. Usually the question "Is it hard to read?" came from some slow reader, and the reply was given in terms of the reporting child's capacity. The teacher felt that she could see progress from week to week in interest, in the number of children who wanted to report, and in the quality of the reports. She saw definite improvement and interest in reading. The day before the weekly book club meeting children were so anxious to finish a book to report that it was not unusual for some pupils to prefer to read during the art or game period. It was felt for this reason alone that the project was worthwhile. Other goals and accomplishments of pupils included greater ease and poise before the class when reporting; speaking distinctly; speaking in sentences; vocabulary growth; ability to answer questions and take criticism; and, of course, greater discrimination in the choice of books and increased enjoyment of good books. In addition to all these points, the project afforded excellent training in sticking to the point, being a good listener, not repeating a question, not wasting time, and participating in simple parliamentary procedures.

## LISTENING

Listening as an art is not new in the history of man's cultural development. Long before he learned written forms, man communicated his thoughts orally to someone who listened and who handed them on to someone else. Throughout history masses of people have been swayed by listening.

The importance of listening as a language ability, however, is a very recent discovery; so recent, in fact, that it has not yet materially affected classroom practices. The ability has been taken for granted, apparently under an assumption that as the child matures mentally he acquires without conscious effort facility in listening, or that listening facility is acquired as a by-product of other language experiences. It is now apparent that the child does not learn to listen well either by growing up or through casual experiences. The child does not necessarily learn how to listen by listening. The teacher now proposes to do something about it.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Edna L. Furness, "Listening and Learning," *Peabody Journal of Education*, January, 1956, 33:212-216.

**Listening in Life.** A strong case can be made for the changed emphasis on listening by observing the place it has in the development of the child and in life today. The child's first language is a listening experience. He gains his first ordered knowledge of the world through the spoken word, and the spoken word provides channels for his thinking and patterns of expression. Learning by hearing continues to be the chief means of learning in the preschool and early school years. Parents use oral communication to give children information about food, dress, manners, and playmates. Inspirational talks on moral values constitute a large part of religious education. Play activities in peer groups are carried on largely by means of conversation and discussion. Thousands of words a day are poured into children's ears by radio and television. In sum, the dominance of oral communication is paralleled by the companion activity of listening.

**Listening in School.** As teachers we have too readily assumed that children naturally learn to listen just as they learn to walk and talk. Now, bombarded as we are by radio and television, which have shifted interest and emphasis away from reading to a considerable extent, we suddenly realize that a large percentage of our children do not listen with comprehension, or discrimination, nor are they able to appreciate or evaluate what they hear. Listening habits are important. Listening is as much an intake skill as reading. Both require active participation. Listening comprehension is very closely related to reading comprehension, usage, and other language abilities.

**Kinds of Listening.** Several kinds of listening can be identified: (1) simple listening—telephone conversation, chatting with friends; (2) discriminative listening—animal and traffic sounds, identifying birds by songs, changes in the teacher's voice to express mood; (3) listening for relaxation—poetry, stories, records; (4) listening for information—announcements, answers to questions, listing of ideas; (5) listening to organize ideas—putting together material from several sources, discussing findings, summarizing, distinguishing points made in a speech, illustrating a point; (6) critical listening—analyzing the purpose of a speaker in discussion, controversy, talk or sermon, and recognizing bias, emotion, exaggeration, propaganda, perplexity, irritation, etc.; (7) creative listening in the enjoyment of music, pictures, drama—listening to and dramatizing stories, expressing thoughts or feeling in own words, getting from a movie an idea for creative writing.

**Teaching Listening.** The question arises, How can young children be taught to listen intelligently? Without realizing it, many teachers have a

thought and associating ideas, and it can be taught. Association of ideas, recall, recognition, and retention are important in the development of a good memory. These abilities should be taught, not as separate undertakings, but as a part of daily work. Several means of cultivating memory are noted:

The teacher can discuss with the children vivid word pictures or sensory impressions. A list of colorful and dramatically descriptive words can be listed and the children asked to repeat and use them. Vocabulary building is important here because one must have words with which to describe what one remembers. In a talk about a hard windstorm, the third-grade children listed words that describe (1) the kinds of winds they heard: breeze, hurricane, cyclone, tornado; (2) sounds the winds made: howling, whistling, roaring, humming, singing, moaning, screeching; and (3) what the wind does: breaks trees, makes static on radio, blows hats off, blows clouds, makes windows chatter, makes waves in the river, rattles shutters, makes dust storms, shakes the house, piles snow in drifts.

There is also the old familiar game of having children enumerate all the articles on a table. Several articles relate to clothing—pins, caps, etc.; several represent food; several show building materials. The children are shown how to organize the articles into groups. Training in organization can be provided also by having children select related words from a list of miscellaneous words on the blackboard.

In the Directions game, the teacher gives children three simple directions to follow such as, "Go to the cupboard; take a piece of yellow chalk; and hop to your seat." Directions should be given slowly but should not be repeated.

In the music period, the teacher asks the class listening to a record to hold up one, two, or three fingers to show the number of instruments or voices they hear. At the end they tell the kinds of instruments they heard.

In music also, children can be taught to hear music in the rhythm of working machinery—a steam shovel, bulldozer, vacuum cleaner, motor idling, washing machine. They can make up tunes for the sounds they hear.

The teacher can give a simple message to a child and see whether he can deliver the message correctly to someone else in the class.

Pupils should understand that we spend more time listening than we do talking, and we gain more information that way than any other. If we do not listen carefully we do not get accurate information and repeating information incorrectly often makes trouble for ourselves and for others.

## EXERCISES

1. Observe a conversation period in school; note strengths and weaknesses. List reasonable goals for the class.
2. Observe children's spontaneous conversations outside school and evaluate. Do the same for adults. Compare.
3. Make a list of goals and standards for discussion at a particular grade level.
4. Determine by inquiry and observation children's experiences in using a telephone in and out of school.
5. List specific suggestions for improving one oral communication experience, using this chapter and other sources.
6. What is good listening in a specific situation such as listening to a resource person or to a radio or TV program? List the characteristics.
7. Sketch a plan for teaching one of the oral communication experiences.

## REFERENCES

*Oral Communication*

- Adams, Fay: *Educating America's Children*, The Ronald Press Company, New York, 1946, pp. 327-334.
- Broening, Angela M., and others: *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, pp. 121-132.
- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, pp. 9-10.
- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chaps. 3-4.
- : *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, chaps. 9-10.
- and Frieda H. Dingee: *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, p. 29.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, pp. 138-147, 159-166, 170-173, 176-181.
- Herrick, Virgil E., and Leland B. Jacobs: *Children and the Language Arts*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955, pp. 101-110.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp. 259-262, 278-295, 554-561.
- Lee, J. Murray, and Dorris M. Lee: *The Child and His Curriculum*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1950, pp. 368-377.
- National Council of Teachers of English, *Commission on the English Curriculum: The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, pp. 305-313.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 106-133.

Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, chaps. 6-7.

### Listening

Artley, A. Sterl: *Interrelationships among the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1954, pp. 34-40.

Brown, J. I.: "How Teachable Is Listening?" *Educational Research Bulletin*, April, 1954, 33:85-93.

Caffrey, John: "Auding," *Review of Educational Research*, April, 1955, 25: 121-138.

Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, chap. 7.

Herrick, Virgil E., and Leland B. Jacobs: *Children and the Language Arts*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955, chap. 7.

Hollow, Sister Mary K.: "Listening Comprehension at the Intermediate Grade Level," *Elementary School Journal*, December, 1955, 56:158-161.

McCarthy, Dorothea, and others: *Factors That Influence Language Growth*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1953, pp. 29-32.

National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, chap. 14, p. 103.

———: *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954, chap. 4.

Niles, Olive S., and Margaret J. Early: "Listening," *Journal of Education*, December, 1955, 138:41-55.

Shane, Harold G.: *Research Helps in Teaching the Language Arts*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Washington, 1955, pp. 68-72.

Smith, Nila B., and others: *Areas of Research Interest in the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1952, pp. 27-34.

Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, pp. 149-154, 160-161, 183-184.

Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 64-65, 77-81, 185, 199-200.



## Written Communication

Letters and invitations are likely to be the first kind of purposeful written language experiences in which children engage, aside from their signatures on written exercises and from labels and titles identifying pictures, objects, and written exercises. Before written work is begun, oral language has been used in and out of school for years as a means of communication. The children have built up a store of communicative experiences and ideas, and they have acquired the vocabulary, control of the sentence, and various other abilities and skills that make possible the oral expression of ideas for ordinary purposes.

**Beginning Written Work: Relation between Oral and Written.** Primary emphasis is placed on oral work in the kindergarten and first grade, but preparation for beginning written work is started very early. The children observe the teacher as she writes names, assignments of duties, records, and notes on the blackboard. As soon as the children acquire a small, basic reading vocabulary, they begin to observe the written forms of words; they read sentences; they engage in class-cooperative enterprises such as making experience charts, which are dictated to the teacher for writing on the board; and they notice sentences, capitals, and periods. Individual writing must be delayed, however, until some progress has been made in spelling and handwriting. Writing begins with simple, purposeful, individual activities, such as signatures and labels. Then follows copying a simple communication dictated by the children and written by the teacher, such as:

Dear Mother,  
Please come to our party.

Louise

Gradually, as the children make progress in the mastery of the difficult skills of handwriting and spelling, they assume responsibility for individual creative efforts and grow in ability to use written language as a medium of expression. For many years, however, freedom of expression in writing is limited by mechanical difficulties. Oral work continues to offer wider range in the choice of theme and treatment. Written work must be restricted in scope and complexity in order to secure something approaching mechanical perfection, or the mechanics must be temporarily sacrificed to secure freedom and spontaneity.

There seem to be two schools of thought that take issue on this point: Those, such as Sheridan, who emphasize linguistic and mechanical correctness from the beginning of written work severely limit free work to keep vocabulary, sentence forms, mechanics of punctuation, spelling, and handwriting under perfect control; the standard of correctness in all written work is set and maintained. On the other hand, there are those who deplore the limitations of too exacting standards upon free expression and who urge children in the early grades to express themselves in writing with something of the same naturalness that they use in oral work. Occasionally, the teacher sets down the child's story as dictated, but the use of this method is limited. For extensive individual writing, children are allowed to write freely, giving as much of a word as is required for identification—usually the beginning—or spelling the word as it sounds and omitting marks of punctuation. Naturally, the children are held responsible for the technicalities which they have studied, but the teacher takes care of the other technicalities in putting the written work in final form. This general policy is used through the grades until the children have had opportunity to learn all the technicalities of writing. Conservative teachers are fearful of the persistence of careless errors habitually made in free writing. Less conservative teachers feel that the danger of persistent errors is smaller than the danger of cramping the child's thinking and restricting his satisfaction in the free use of vocabulary, sentence forms, direct discourse, figures of speech, and the like. The authors are inclined to favor freedom of expression in early work and later, but on the condition that the children as well as the teacher fully understand the situation and do not use their freedom as an excuse for careless work. The position on the point taken by a teacher will be clearly reflected in the character of written work that appears in the early grades.

Habits and abilities developed in oral work will appear in written work with increasing vividness and clarity; and the teacher will find very soon

that several phases of oral and written work are combined in various experiences and that to some extent growth in both proceeds simultaneously.

## FRIENDLY LETTER

While the early written language of the children takes a variety of forms and serves a number of purposes, the friendly letter soon emerges as the most common form of written language and continues in importance through and beyond the school life of the child. As noted above, the beginning is a very simple form of communication, but it gains in wealth of ideas and in freedom and variety of expression with the years. The primary purpose of the friendly letter is to provide entertainment; a secondary purpose is to give information. The entertainment purpose gives the friendly letter its distinctive literary quality, characteristic of all creative work.

**Specific Objectives.** Friendly-letter writing draws largely from the general language objectives discussed in Chapter 3 under "Oral Communication," and shares these in part with other forms of written communication. Primarily important is attitude—willingness to write. For many people, writing a letter is a chore, not a pleasure. If the teacher can show children that letter writing is fun, he will set up conditions for initiating the experience and improving quality.

Closely associated with interest is pride and satisfaction in doing a good job. Some people obviously enjoy writing letters. For them, writing letters is a creative experience; they get satisfaction from the expression of ideas in appropriate language, such as one gets in writing a story or a play. It is possible that with proper instruction the number who derive this pleasure can be increased.

A third major consideration is courtesy. Courtesy should be assumed inasmuch as the letter is a *friendly* one, but children need instruction in specific points of etiquette and in proper attitudes toward other people. Courtesy appears in the choice of form of address and of a complimentary close suitable to the occasion. It also appears in the ideas expressed and in the choice of words. In discussing the letter-writing difficulties of intermediate-grade children, Fitzgerald says:<sup>1</sup>

The content of many of these letters and their crudity of expression indicate the necessity for an appraisal of children's attitudes toward letter writing. For example, in the few letters of congratulation and sympathy in this collection,

<sup>1</sup> Jess S. Hudson and others, *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, p. 334.

discourtesy and impotiteness were often implied and sometimes expressed toward the one to whom the letter was addressed. One girl, in what was at best a crude attempt to congratulate a friend who had won a prize, wrote as follows:

Well, I hear you won. I supposed you would because you got so much help. It's sure fine to be teacher's pet. Glad you won, though.

He goes on to point out that failure to write letters of condolence and sympathy properly is due in many cases to both emotional restraint and difficulty of expression.

Fourth, the difference between the empty, fatuous letter and the richly entertaining one is primarily a matter of content. Difficulties appear in the choice of what to say and of too many or too few details. If one is on a trip and enjoying a variety of experiences, he may sum up the matter laconically by saying that he is having a marvelous time. At the other extreme, he bores his reader by giving a mere catalogue of places and dates. It is better to choose a single incident or event and to elaborate on it, giving the setting, what happened, and especially one's observations on and feelings about what happened. In regard to the writing of a class letter, Brown and Butterfield say:<sup>2</sup>

The children will want to choose what are the important things to tell about. Perhaps there has been one big center of interest that will loom larger than anything else the class has been doing. If the children instantly pounce upon such a topic, by all means develop it at once. Should the whole letter center about this topic, so much the better. There will be opportunity for many interesting details.

Encourage the children to develop the topic, including, besides the mere facts, their opinions and emotional reactions. Stimulate the children to think of vivid descriptive words. If something funny has happened, be sure to include it. Humor is usually appreciated in a social letter.

Following is a group letter written by a second-grade class to Shirley when she had the measles:

Dear Shirley,

We have been studying about wool. We saw colored slides and pictures of sheep. One day we went to Mrs. Johnson's room to see a big loom, and what do you think she let us do? She let us finish weaving a rug which her class had started. Here in our room we have started weaving little rugs on hand looms. We are going to use the prettiest ones in our doll house. Several of the boys made looms of their own at home. Three of us are weaving woolen caps for our dolls.

<sup>2</sup> Dorothy L. Brown and Marguerite Butterfield, *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, pp. 142-143. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

We finished the *Eskimo Twins*. It was very funny at the end. The Angokok got so fat that the boys suggested pulling him behind the boat like a dead seal.

We hope that you can come to school again very soon.

Sincerely,

Your Class

Content is important in adult letters also. About GI's Burgess says, "What they wanted in letters from home were the little household details. How the cat upset the can of milk all over the kitchen floor; how sister gave up smoking; and how that cheeky Lester gal is still running after Bob Hale. Snapshots, that's what people want, in these intimate, friendly letters." \* A clue to content is naturally found in what the reader is interested in.

Burgess goes on to say: \*

Mere trivialities of gossip, however, aren't enough to make an interesting letter. You must give a part of yourself. A happening needs the sauce of personality to make it tasteful . . . Getting yourself into your letter is not so hard as you may think. Each of us has, hidden in his subconscious, more interesting thoughts and fancies than he ever utters or writes down. Mistakenly, we feel that we ought to write what is considered important and throw away pet ideas and whims. So let yourself go. You may feel silly at first, but keep it up, and soon queer little doors will open in your mind and you will be amazed to find how remarkable you are. Write what you think about while you're shaving or doing your hair. In these unconsidered moments the mind disports its vagaries, tickles you with odd suggestions.

In the fifth place, language is important too. The language of the letter is the informal language of conversation; in fact, the letter is written conversation, if something of a monologue. The choice of vividly descriptive words and phrases, figures of speech, direct discourse, and transposed phrases and clauses give well-chosen ideas color and force. Slang is permissible. Usage, while free, should avoid offensive vulgarities and obscure meanings.

Finally, mechanics should be correct but not burdensome. The body of the letter is the important thing. In the lower grades, the teacher will take care of the heading and suggest the appropriate greeting and complimentary close. Capitalization, punctuation, spacing, and other technical details need not be discussed until later years. Drilling young children on the details of form takes the joy out of writing letters, and letter writing

\* Gelett Burgess, "The Simple Art of Writing Letters," *The Reader's Digest*, May, 1948, p. 49.

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

becomes a prescribed task. Gradually, in later grades, the children assume more responsibility, but the teacher continues to supply necessary technical information about which the children have not been instructed. Manuscript form, legibility, and neatness are treated as reasonable courtesies and as aids to thought giving.

It is necessary to give some attention to mechanics throughout the grades. In an extensive investigation of the difficulties in letter writing of children in the intermediate grades, Fitzgerald gives an appraisal of difficulties in mechanics. The results of three investigations of letters at the fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade levels are summarized in the table below.

Table 4-1. Summary of Composition and Letter-form Errors in the Life Letters of Intermediate-grade Children

	Fourth grade (Parks)	Fifth grade (Groghegan)	Sixth grade (Kremer)
Number of letters	730	748	611
Number of running words (approximate)	87,000	100,000	105,000
Number of errors	12,525	13,673	12,630
Number of errors per letter	17.2	18.3	20.7
Number of errors per 100 words	14.4	13.7	12.0
Punctuation (per cent of all composition errors)	31.5	40.1	41.8
Capitalization (per cent of all composition errors)	9.2	10.7	14.7
Sentence structure (per cent of all composition errors)	8.4	11.2	12.3

SOURCE: Jess S. Hudson and others, *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, p. 337.

It will be observed that punctuation errors head the list, constituting some 40 per cent of all errors. Disturbing facts are the large number of errors per letter (eighteen) and the small amount of improvement from grade to grade. The most frequent errors in punctuation were in the use of the comma, period, and interrogation mark. Some encouragement is found in the fact that the errors involve only a few types, or failure in:<sup>3</sup>

1. Placing the period after a declarative sentence.
2. Correct use of the comma in a series, in direct quotations, in compound sentences, after appositives and introductory words, and after such words as *yes*, *no*, and *well*.
3. Use of the interrogation mark after a question.

<sup>3</sup> Hudson and others, *op. cit.*, pp. 335-337.

4. Use of the quotation marks in direct quotations.
5. Use of the apostrophe in contractions and in expressing possession.

**Situations.** The friendly letter by its very nature is an intimate, personal communication and loses some of its reality when submitted to class treatment. Most writing of a personal nature must be done in the seclusion of the home. If we cannot supervise the writing of intimate personal letters in the home, we can direct children's attention to the home situations that require letter writing, and we can give some school training in friendly-letter writing. There are many school situations in which the writing of social letters is meaningful and purposeful. The following are illustrative and suggestive:

1. Writing to a sick classmate temporarily absent from school
2. Writing to a former teacher
3. Writing to a near relative
4. Congratulating a friend on a noteworthy achievement
5. Inviting a fireman or policeman to visit the class and explain his duties
6. Asking permission to visit a post office or dairy
7. Sending to railroads or chambers of commerce for illustrative material
8. Corresponding with a child in another country through the Junior Red Cross
9. Corresponding with a child in another area of the United States
10. Writing to Santa Claus
11. Inviting a friend to a party
12. Inviting parents to attend a class or school program
13. Thanking school officials for materials and services
14. Inquiring about the duties of public officeholders

DeBoer adds to this list, pointing out the appropriateness of letters of criticism or approval to favorite radio, TV, or film players, to admired athletes, and to magazines and newspapers; and points out that all these can be prepared in the classroom under the guidance of the teacher.\*

The situation, moreover, should be a real one in which the child has a natural reason for writing to a particular person for a particular purpose. If possible, all letters should be mailed. The general practice of choosing a single letter for mailing is often a practical necessity, but care should be taken that selected letters be chosen at various times as widely as possible from the class efforts so that as many pupils as possible may experience the satisfaction of having their letters mailed. Selecting the best letter for mailing often offers little motivation to the great majority of the class; therefore, letter writing under this circumstance becomes a mere practice

\* J. J. DeBoer, "Earmarks of a Modern Language Arts Program in the Elementary School," *Elementary English*, December, 1954, 31:493.

exercise for many pupils. Quality is more important than quantity of work. In some cases it is feasible to prepare composite letters using the best features from several individual letters. Some judgment must be exercised in selecting persons to whom to write. Certain adults do not appreciate receiving letters from children, and others are too busy or too infirm to reply.

Regular letters from a primary grade to a member of the group who was bedfast with rheumatic fever were stimulated throughout one winter by replies written by the little patient's older sister. In her letters, the seventh-grade girl was careful to thank the class for gifts; to tell how the patient was progressing, what she was able to do, what books she had read; and to include some message from the sick child to the group.

Following an excursion to a supermarket, a group of eight-year-olds wrote the following thank-you letter to the manager:

Dear Mr. Kent:

We are glad that you allowed us to visit your store. We learned a great deal, especially about fruit and vegetables and how you keep food.

Thank you for inviting us.

Sincerely,

Grade Three

Brown and Butterfield also caution against using the classroom post office as a device for stimulating letter writing; it may degenerate into "silly note-writing. With so many opportunities for writing real letters, it seems unnecessary to resort to an activity of such doubtful value."

In the reference cited above, James A. Fitzgerald reports the occasions for and content of personal letters written by children in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades.<sup>1</sup> The letters in the main were written to friends, relatives, teachers, and former schoolmates, in that order of frequency. Content and frequencies for all the 3,184 letters are given in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2. Content in Personal Letters, Grades 4 to 6

Experiences, activities, and events . . . . .	2,752	Apology and explanation . . . . .	108
Objects . . . . .	1,165	Animals . . . . .	557
Thanks . . . . .	282	Request . . . . .	213
Greetings . . . . .	17	School . . . . .	1,756
Congratulations . . . . .	2	Invitations, acceptances, etc. . . . .	226
Sympathy and condolence . . . . .	48	Weather . . . . .	828
		Inspiration and encouragement . . . . .	21

Children naturally write about matters of most concern to themselves: personal experiences, school, animals, and objects. The weather seems

<sup>1</sup> See Hudson and others, *op. cit.*, pp. 332-334.



to be a favorite topic with children as with adults. Disconcerting, if not surprising, is the small number of letters relating to thanks for gifts and services, greetings, congratulations, inspiration, and encouragement. Apparently children are not accustomed to thinking of other people and to taking advantage of many opportunities to express interest, concern, and appreciation. Fundamentally involved are social attitudes and learning the means of observing social amenities that contribute to pleasant social relations.

An entirely different occasion is provided by the writing of letters such as might have been written by a historical character or by an imaginary person living in a particular period. Correlated with work in the social studies, letters of this type help students to think clearly about conditions, problems, manners, and customs of the past. Following is a part of such a letter written by a seventh-grade girl; impressed by her study of history, she pretends that she is living in New York City during the stirring times of the Revolutionary War and writes at length to her cousin in Boston:

New York City  
November 25, 1776

Dear Cousin Kathryn-Bridget,

It frightens me so to think about the War, that I would like you to know exactly how I feel about it. Of course you have your own ideas about it but it is a relief to think that I can share with someone and you are my choice, because you I feel, are understanding. Around here people are forever talking about the war, but if you don't want an argument, you don't bring it up for there are Patriots, of which I am one, and there are Tories, too.

The worst of the war was fought around here. That is a terrible experience—to be right in the midst of war. You probably saw General Washington when he was in your city of Boston. I have seen him only once and that was when he rode by a fortnight ago. . . .

It might be of interest to you that I am getting a new dark blue silk dress. It has rows and rows of white buttons and I think it is going to be simply stunning.

My sister Matilda-Jean is going to be married a year from Christmas to a very nice appearing young man, and mama and papa think he will make a good husband.

I wish you and Aunt Bessie and Uncle Tim, plus your twin brothers Tim Jr. and Jim a very merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

I remain your dear cousin,  
Rebecca Adell Whiten

**Processes.** A suitable procedure for handling the friendly letter includes the following steps:

First, set up a real situation, a natural one arising in connection with

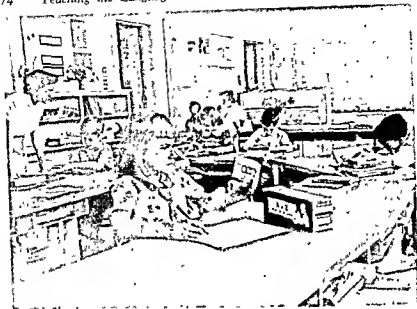


Fig 4-1 Using an alphabet box, second grade. (Courtesy of Len Bothurst)

in the third grade and beyond build up word lists that are permanently available to the child, and this method conserves the teacher's energy and time. Of course, in the later grades the children will make considerable use of the dictionary.

The fifth step is a critical evaluation of what has been written and subsequent correction. Again attention is given to content; the pupil asks himself such questions as, *Have I said what I intended to say? Have I put it in the proper order? and Have I used well-chosen words and constructions?* Attention is given also to correctness of expression and to mechanics: sentence structure, usage, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, handwriting, and placing and spacing the several parts of the letter. The teacher is faced for the first time, but not the last, with the problem of handling corrections. Researchers have little to say in favor of the teacher going over children's written work and marking mistakes in red ink. The only kind of correction that seems to have much value is self-correction; but how? Of course, going over one composition at a time with the child is ideal, but it consumes entirely too much time to be practical. Mass correction can be handled to some extent by presenting common difficulties to the class, preferably by using the blackboard, discussing the errors, and correcting them. A composition that has very few errors is selected for class study. It is written

on the board by the pupil-author exactly as originally written, with all errors and defects. The pupil makes as many corrections in his own composition as he can, and then other children are invited to make additional corrections. Several other compositions may be handled in the same manner. Following class study and correction of the sample compositions, each pupil turns to his own composition and makes similar corrections. Probably glaring and common faults will be discovered and corrected in this class procedure. Less common defects peculiar to individual compositions can be noted and reported to the class for correction or can be corrected individually. It is helpful to place a carefully selected list of key points on the board for the pupils' reference in checking their own work.<sup>8</sup>

The final step is rewriting, with the necessary correction and revision of content, language, and form. Rewriting is an essential step in the early stages of learning and is useful later in writing important letters. It may be a valuable learning experience, if properly handled. Rewriting should not be used as a punishment; it should serve a learning purpose recognized by the child. Merely copying the teacher's corrected copy has little value. If a letter is to be mailed, and presumably it is, the teacher must finally assure himself that it is in proper form. This will require a check of the pupil's check and possibly some further revision.

**Examples.** Jessie Cooper, Fresno city schools, Fresno, California, reports a series of lessons in the writing of social letters by a sixth-grade class:

#### *Situation*

A few weeks after Red Cross Christmas boxes were sent to Hawaii, a letter came to the class from a little Japanese girl living near Hilo. The class wanted to answer this letter.

#### *Objectives*

1. Selecting content interesting to the reader
2. Reviewing essentials of form
3. Enjoying writing a friendly letter

#### *General Procedure*

1. First day; discuss:
  - a. What makes a letter interesting? Read examples of children's or adults' interesting friendly letters to the class, such as:

Dear Boys and Girls,

I am a little Indian girl. Just now, school is out, and I am having a good time.

<sup>8</sup> Lois V. Johnson and Mary Bany, "Compositions, Not Commas," *Elementary English*, December, 1954, 31:466-468.

- f. The manner of addressing envelopes is recalled and pupils address their own envelopes.

In a third grade a real situation was produced when Anastacia left for a visit to Greece. She had told the class about her trip and about her relatives in Greece; and she had shown folders and pictures of the ship upon which she would sail. During the days which elapsed after Anna said good-by and before she actually sailed from New York, the children wrote stories which they mailed to reach Anna on board ship. They also wrote her a letter:

Dear Anna,

It seems strange in school today without you and we miss you very much. Our arithmetic average went down this morning. We think we needed you to help us.

Today Alberta Wing came back. Perhaps you knew her when she was with us in first grade.

Miss B brought the Shipping News from the Sunday paper. We saw that your ship will arrive in New York on Wednesday. We will be thinking of you on Friday when it is time for your boat to sail.

We hope you will enjoy our stories and that you will have a pleasant voyage. Be sure to write to us.

Your friends in Room 26

A month later, after the receipt of a letter and several postcards from Anna, the class sent the following letter. It was written much more easily than the first. There were many things to tell Anna, and the teacher helped the class make a selection or the letter would have been too long: "I wonder if Anna would really be interested in that? . . . When we write 'How are you?' or say 'I hope you are well,' is that telling Anna anything? . . . Let's choose just a few things to tell her and then explain them. . . . We don't want a lot of little short, choppy sentences, do we?"

Heading and salutation were written on the board by the teacher with only passing comment upon punctuation, capitalization, etc. The letter was then written by the teacher as dictated by the children. Some criticism, evaluation, and corrections were made by them. Three children who were considered good penmen made copies of the letter; and from the three copies, a committee of children chose the following one, which it considered especially well written. The envelope was addressed by the child who had transcribed the letter, and another pupil was chosen to mail it.

Dear Anna,

We received your letter and cards and like them so much that we have them on the bulletin board where everyone can see them. The program is there too.

*Superior*

Fresno, California  
March 22, 1950

Dear Mrs. A,

We visited an art exhibit which had drawings by children of foreign countries. The oil painting "Seascape" impressed me more than any of the others. It was bright and ready to come to life. You could just feel yourself on the rock, and hear the waves dash against the rocks. The spray seemed fine and wet as it rose from the waves. The sky fitted in perfectly with the sea. It had so much action and realness in it. Indeed, the child who made this picture must have felt the sea.

Our newspaper is coming along nicely. The articles have been coming in faster. This time we will have more pages. Our newspaper is lots of fun as everyone can put in articles.

Your friend,

*Satisfactory*

Fresno 4, California  
March 17, 1950

Dear Miss B,

We sure enjoyed you as our student teacher last semester.

I hope you like teaching in the fifth grade. You are probably the fifth graders' favorite student teacher, you were in our room with everybody.

I wish you would please come in and see us.

Love,

*Unsatisfactory*

Fresno 4, California  
March 17, 1950

Dear Aunt C,

We are studying South America and we have broken up in groups and some girls and we have taken Uruguay and Paraguay.

I hope you can come down in April sometime

Love

The letter-writing activity offers good opportunity for the enjoyment and study of letters of literary merit, such as Helen C. Washburne's *Letters of Chaney* and J. B. Bishop's *Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children*. Reading these letters and others by distinguished persons is fun and provides a means of checking the desired qualities set up by the children as standards for their own letters. A survey of 150 letters of outstanding women shows the distinguishing characteristics to be courtesy, informality, humor, opinion, optimism, and good organization. Informality is revealed by using colloquialisms or conversational expressions; inventing expressions; including pen sketches and illustrations; eliminating overformal head-

ings and conclusions, and supplying figures of speech humorously exaggerated. Courtesy is shown by giving due attention to the points in a letter which is being answered; never failing to express expected congratulations; never failing to acknowledge obligations; expressing good wishes; and adapting subject matter to the age and interests of the reader.\*

## THE BUSINESS LETTER

The business letter is like the friendly letter in many respects, but there are important differences. In the first place, unlike the friendly letter, the business letter is largely a school enterprise; occasional business letters are written at home, as in ordering goods from mail-order houses, but for the most part they are written at school for securing materials and services in various curricular activities. In the second place, an important difference is found in the purpose of the letter: The distinctive character of the friendly letter is entertainment, while the purpose of the business letter is expository. The third difference, a matter of tone and approach, grows out of these different purposes. The friendly letter is informal, expansive, entertaining, and humorous; the business letter is brief, pointed, and formal—businesslike.

Past practice has placed the writing of business letters in the later grades, implying delayed social needs and an assumption of greater difficulty. The modern program, on the contrary, finds many occasions for writing business letters in the primary grades.

**Specific Objectives.** Among the objectives of the business letter, courtesy receives a high rating. Convention prescribes a standard salutation (*Dear Mr. Smith, Gentlemen, etc.*) and a conventional close (*Yours truly, Yours sincerely, Cordially yours*). The familiarity of the corresponding forms of the friendly letter are to be avoided. The business letter, however, is always courteous in tone; requests are couched in gracious language, such as *Please send me. . . .* Brevity and directness are required, and the purpose of the letter is usually expressed in the opening sentence. The assumption is that businessmen are busy people whose time should be saved by clarity and directness. All essential facts are given. In an order for goods, it is necessary to describe exactly what is wanted, to give catalogue numbers if possible, and to figure the amounts of money involved accurately. When several items are ordered they are put in list form. Care is taken to observe the conventions in the arrangement of the parts of the letter. Spelling, hand-

\* H. B. Reed, *Psychology of Elementary School Subjects*, Ginn & Company, Boston, 1938, pp. 138-139.

writing, and punctuation should be correct, for businessmen are not tolerant of carelessness in these respects, and because accuracy in communication is necessary. The use of a colon after the salutation is regarded as good form. It is customary to refer to enclosures, such as checks, and to enclose a stamp if the letter contains a request for information. It is good practice to keep a copy of all business letters.

**Situations.** Opportunities for writing business letters arise frequently. One of the most common situations occurs in connection with ordering materials for use in various curricular areas, such as social studies, health, and nature study. These materials in part are supplied free by many firms and agencies. Included in this group are health booklets and posters, travel circulars, safety records and charts, exhibits of products, pictures and slides, and samples of materials. Children also have occasion to visit a farm, a dairy, a post office, a police court, a fire station, or a library, and arrangements can be made by letter. Often the use of public transportation facilities is involved in making trips, and children may write the necessary letters. Businessmen, professional men, and public officials are often invited to come to the school to present matters of interest to the class. In the later grades, children have occasion to write letters seeking temporary employment. Of course, letters of appreciation for special services and favors are in order.

**Processes.** At the seventh-grade level it may be assumed that the children have had considerable experience in both the content and the form of the letter. It is necessary to review both content and form, however, and to provide some remedial work. A typical handling of a business letter is provided by Nellis S. Willison, teacher of the seventh grade, Allegheny Junior-Senior High School, Cumberland, Maryland.<sup>10</sup> A project that involved presenting to the library a source book of authors of current literature at the junior high school level was under way. Committees were appointed to look up material in the library and make reports to the class. Some committees were unable to locate suitable material, and a suggestion was made that letters of inquiry be written to publishers. A series of lessons was devoted to the mechanics of form, capitalization, and punctuation. Sample business letters were studied. Standards were derived from the study of models and posted in the room for reference. Individual children prepared letters, and the better letters were chosen for mailing. Rough drafts were read to the class, difficulties noted, and remedial exercises provided. The replies of publishers were read and examined by the children.

<sup>10</sup> Angela M. Broening, *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, pp. 134-135.

The next step was writing letters to authors. This was recognized as a more exacting task, and added care was required in composing the letters. The children examined letters brought from home and other letters found in language and literature books. Possible adaptations to individual authors and proper forms of salutation and closing were considered. First drafts were prepared and read to the class for criticism. The children were not satisfied and felt the need for additional practice, particularly in the use of adjectives and in sentence variety. Monotonous sentences were written on the board and changes, such as using an inverted order, were suggested. Practice in transposing clauses was provided, and examples of forceful sentences were found and examined. The study of ways of expressing exact ideas effectively involved the study of adjectives. Discussions of the use of effective adjectives were found in books; dictionaries were consulted; and sentences were rewritten. The letters were finally rewritten and checked for form. Responses from well-known authors were gratifying. In their personal letters the children continued to use the skills that they had acquired during this undertaking.

The handling of the business letter in the primary grades is like that of the friendly letter described in a previous section.

## INVITATIONS, ACCEPTANCES, AND THANK-YOU NOTES

**Situations.** Schoolwork is largely concerned with preparing children to carry on activities in the home and community, but to some extent occasions which present immediate problems naturally arise in school. The class may be having a party, program, or exhibit, and decide to invite parents, school officials, or other interested persons. One class may entertain another class. A pupil may invite other pupils to a party at school or at home. A public official or businessman may be asked to address the pupils on some topic of current interest, or a visiting artist or entertainer may be invited to the school. In many of these situations invitations are in order; and in some cases, acceptances. Any special service or favor should be recognized by a thank-you note. Fitzgerald's survey of the spontaneous letters of children, reported earlier in the chapter, shows that these common courtesies are frequently neglected.

Invitations, acceptances, and thank-you notes represent special forms of epistolary communication in which children receive training in social amenities, in recognizing occasions that require them, and instruction in the use of certain language forms. Of course, some of the experiences may be either oral or written; and certain characteristics, such as courtesy and appropriate language, are common to all. Here we are primarily concerned



with written forms. The need and value of training in the written forms vary with school communities, increasing in those communities where social functions are frequent and high standards of social amenities are maintained.

The usual form of this type of letter is an informal note; less frequently, as in the case of wedding invitations and announcements, the notes are more formal in character. The child during his school life is mainly concerned with informal letters, and the training program should concentrate on these. The formal note will be used later, if at all, and the child can be referred to common sources of information, such as books on etiquette.<sup>11</sup>

**Specific Objectives.** The invitation, acceptance, or thank-you note has a specific purpose and limited scope, in contrast to the generality of the social letter. The statement of facts should be clear and complete; in the case of an invitation, who, what, when, where—and possibly how to dress—must be included. Courtesy requires that the acceptance note show sincere pleasure and appreciation for favors anticipated. The language can be simple in style, but it should be formally correct. Proper forms are always observed in heading, salutation, and close. Suitable paper, ink, and longhand writing are requisites. Promptness in responding to invitations and in expressing appreciation are highly desirable. Certainly it is necessary to inform the hostess or guest promptly in case of necessary change in plans. The thank-you note has many of the same characteristics: sincere expression of gratitude for a gift or favor, promptness, appropriate paper with matching envelope, ink, and proper forms of salutation and close, such as *Dear Mary* and *Cordially yours*.

A group of primary school children were invited to see movies at the hour when they usually went to the library. A vote was taken, and a majority wanted to see the movie; but since the librarian had been very kind to them, the children felt that some explanation was due her. The word *tactful* was introduced to them; and it was pointed out that their note must not hurt Mrs. MacE's feelings or make her feel that the class came to the library only when there was nothing else to do. The following note was the result; it was copied and delivered to the librarian:

Dear Mrs. MacE,

We have been invited to see movies in the auditorium this afternoon at 2 o'clock. They are supposed to be very good pictures. If you don't mind we would like to see them.

Next Friday we will come to the library as usual.

Sincerely,

Grade Three

**Processes.** The procedures described above for written communication are generally applicable in the case of social notes. The writing experience should be initiated by a real situation. Models should be examined for ideas of form, tone, and language; and standards appropriate to the grade and class should be set up. Differences from other kinds of written communication may be noted, and some reasons for the differences discussed. The class may join in the planning of the note and in the writing of notes that concern the whole class. Samples of children's work may be collected and preserved for future use as models. Textbooks provide help in the form of samples and lists of key points.

There may be times, however, when motivation is great and the children feel a need or a desire to write *immediately*. In such a case, when they know what they want to say and how they want to say it, to examine models or textbooks would not only waste time but might result in frustration. An assembly program put on by a second grade pleased the third-grade children in the audience so much that, when they returned to their rooms, they suggested writing a thank-you letter to Miss B, the second-grade teacher. Although it was time for dismissal, the children wanted to wait and write the note; so the teacher turned to the board and wrote as the children dictated:

Dear Miss B,

We enjoyed the Christmas play your children put on for us. It was lovely and very well done.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Grade Three

This note was copied by a child and immediately delivered to the second-grade room. Because the moment was propitious, the work was all done eagerly in a few minutes, and the children derived deep satisfaction from it. Had the teacher suggested that the pupils wait until the language period next day, the enthusiasm would have dissipated, and writing the note might have been a real chore. How many adults are prone to postpone such simple tasks, with the result that they never do them?

## EXERCISES

1. From observation and inquiry, list situations in which children have occasion to write letters and notes.
2. Collect samples of children's letters and notes acceptable in content and form for a particular age or grade.
3. Collect samples of business letters that can be used as models.

4. Point out common elements in business and social letters.
5. List five qualities of good friendly or business letters, and rank the qualities in order of importance.
6. From samples of children's letters, make a three-point scale as described in the chapter.
7. Sketch a plan for teaching a lesson or series of lessons for letter writing in a particular grade.

## REFERENCES

- Applegate, Mauree: *Helping Children Write*, Row, Peterson & Company, Evanston, Ill., 1954, chap. 6.
- Artley, A. Sterl, and others: *Interrelationships among the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1954, pp. 4-12.
- Broening, Angela M., and others: *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, chap. 7.
- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, chap. 8.
- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chap. 5.
- : *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, pp. 44, 194, 221.
- and Marian Zollinger. *Guiding Language Learning*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chaps. 13-15.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, pp. 185-191, 208-216.
- Herrick, Virgil E., and Leland B. Jacobs: *Children and the Language Arts*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955, pp. 229-236.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp. 320-326, 332-338, 340.
- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, pp. 166-189.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, pp. 108-109, 321-322.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 209-219, 227-236.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, pp. 273-290, 309-328.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 133-135.

**Processes.** The procedures described above for written communication are generally applicable in the case of social notes. The writing experience should be initiated by a real situation. Models should be examined for ideas of form, tone, and language; and standards appropriate to the grade and class should be set up. Differences from other kinds of written communication may be noted, and some reasons for the differences discussed. The class may join in the planning of the note and in the writing of notes that concern the whole class. Samples of children's work may be collected and preserved for future use as models. Textbooks provide help in the form of samples and lists of key points.

There may be times, however, when motivation is great and the children feel a need or a desire to write *immediately*. In such a case, when they know what they want to say and how they want to say it, to examine models or textbooks would not only waste time but might result in frustration. An assembly program put on by a second grade pleased the third-grade children in the audience so much that, when they returned to their rooms, they suggested writing a thank-you letter to Miss B, the second-grade teacher. Although it was time for dismissal, the children wanted to wait and write the note; so the teacher turned to the board and wrote as the children dictated:

Dear Miss B,

We enjoyed the Christmas play your children put on for us. It was lovely and very well done

We wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Grade Three

This note was copied by a child and immediately delivered to the second-grade room. Because the moment was propitious, the work was all done eagerly in a few minutes, and the children derived deep satisfaction from it. Had the teacher suggested that the pupils wait until the language period next day, the enthusiasm would have dissipated, and writing the note might have been a real chore. How many adults are prone to postpone such simple tasks, with the result that they never do them?

## EXERCISES

1. From observation and inquiry, list situations in which children have occasion to write letters and notes.
2. Collect samples of children's letters and notes acceptable in content and form for a particular age or grade.
3. Collect samples of business letters that can be used as models.

interpretation. Many types of literature are felt more deeply when heard in oral reading and in choral speaking. The charm of poetry especially is enhanced by adding beautiful imagery, rhyme, and rhythm to ideas. Compare, for example, the silent and oral reading of "The Barefoot Boy," "The Psalm of Life," "Ode to the Sea," "The Bells," "Opportunity," "My Star," and the Beatitudes.<sup>1</sup>

## DRAMATIZATION

Dramatization experiences take several forms: finger play, dramatic play, pantomime, informal dramatization, puppets, and formal dramatization. These forms represent progressive stages in child development from ego-centric to social behavior, and they challenge the child's increasing ability to handle complex experiences. The teacher naturally chooses the form that is appropriate to the level of maturity of the children, but he does not restrict the class to any one form; variety is desirable to avoid monotony, to fit particular situations in various phases of schoolwork, and to meet a variety of specific goals in language development.

**Finger Play.** Finger play is a simple form of poetic dramatization, thoroughly enjoyed by children and used to good effect by teachers in the lower grades. The enjoyment of literature is deepened by listening and speaking, accompanied by dramatic action. Finger plays deal with animals—kittens, squirrels, rabbits, pigs—and with familiar household tasks. Many of the poems include numbers, counting, and concepts of size and position. Opportunities are offered for speech training such as the sounding of troublesome letters.<sup>2</sup>

A finger play thoroughly enjoyed by kindergarten children is the story of the little ducks. The action accompanying the poem is indicated by numbers. The teacher recites the poem, inviting children to participate in the action and in reciting the words with her. In the final action, five children may move off toward an imaginary barnyard. The poem can be repeated several times, different children taking the part of the five ducks going to the barnyard.

### LITTLE DUCKS

Five little ducks, and they were new  
Big ducks, little ducks, and fat ducks, too. (1)

<sup>1</sup> See May Hill Arbuthnot, *Children and Books*, Scott, Foresman and Company, Chicago, 1957, part 2.

<sup>2</sup> Louise B. Scott and J. J. Thompson, *Talking Time*, Webster Publishing Company, Pasadena, Calif., 1951, p. 221.

## Dramatization and Choral Speaking

In the two preceding chapters dealing with oral and written communication we have been concerned with language experiences that are carried on in the home and community as well as in the school. Dramatization and choral speaking, in contrast, are mainly school and childhood activities. Dramatization is seldom used in adult life, but it figures prominently in children's spontaneous play activities, and is a valuable medium for handling various phases of the school program.

Dramatization and choral speaking derive their linguistic values not so much from the preparation they offer for carrying on adult forms of language experiences as from their usefulness in carrying on various phases of the school program and from the incidental training they provide in important language abilities and skills. Dramatization especially makes a strong appeal to children and sets up strongly motivated situations for improving language. Choral speaking was promoted originally as a device for improving voice quality and speech, and it is still advocated and used for this purpose by speech correctionists.

A second value of dramatization and choral speaking—their greatest value—lies in the appreciation of literature. Language study, rightly or wrongly, has long been associated with literature. It has been found that the dramatization of stories leads to better understanding, to more vivid interpretation, and to increased enjoyment of incident, character, and style. The chief value of choral speaking arises from the enjoyment of group

interpretation. Many types of literature are felt more deeply when heard in oral reading and in choral speaking. The charm of poetry especially is enhanced by adding beautiful imagery, rhyme, and rhythm to ideas. Compare, for example, the silent and oral reading of "The Barefoot Boy," "The Psalm of Life," "Ode to the Sea," "The Bells," "Opportunity," "My Star," and the Beatitudes.<sup>1</sup>

## DRAMATIZATION

Dramatization experiences take several forms: finger play, dramatic play, pantomime, informal dramatization, puppets, and formal dramatization. These forms represent progressive stages in child development from ego-centric to social behavior, and they challenge the child's increasing ability to handle complex experiences. The teacher naturally chooses the form that is appropriate to the level of maturity of the children, but he does not restrict the class to any one form; variety is desirable to avoid monotony, to fit particular situations in various phases of schoolwork, and to meet a variety of specific goals in language development.

**Finger Play.** Finger play is a simple form of poetic dramatization, thoroughly enjoyed by children and used to good effect by teachers in the lower grades. The enjoyment of literature is deepened by listening and speaking, accompanied by dramatic action. Finger plays deal with animals—kittens, squirrels, rabbits, pigs—and with familiar household tasks. Many of the poems include numbers, counting, and concepts of size and position. Opportunities are offered for speech training such as the sounding of troublesome letters.<sup>2</sup>

A finger play thoroughly enjoyed by kindergarten children is the story of the little ducks. The action accompanying the poem is indicated by numbers. The teacher recites the poem, inviting children to participate in the action and in reciting the words with her. In the final action, five children may move off toward an imaginary barnyard. The poem can be repeated several times, different children taking the part of the five ducks going to the barnyard.

### LITTLE DUCKS

Five little ducks, and they were new  
Big ducks, little ducks, and fat ducks, too. (1)

<sup>1</sup> See May Hill Arbuthnot, *Children and Books*, Scott, Foresman and Company, Chicago, 1957, part 2.

<sup>2</sup> Louise B. Scott and J. J. Thompson, *Talking Time*, Webster Publishing Company, Pasadena, Calif., 1951, p. 221.

One had a feather curled over his back (2)  
 And he leads the others with a quack, quack, quack. (3)  
 And he leads the others with a quack, quack, quack. (3)  
 And he leads the others with a quack, quack, quack. (3)  
 Down to the barnyard  
 They did go  
 A wibble-wabbity all in a row. (4)  
 One had a feather curled over his back (2)  
 And he leads the others with a quack, quack, quack. (3)

### *Action*

- (1) Hold up hand with fingers up for five ducks.
- (2) For feather curled over back, crook first finger over fist.
- (3) Put palms together, one hand on top of the other, and open fingers for quack.
- (4) Keep hands together, lean forward slightly, and move back and forth for wibble-wabbity.

**Dramatic Play.** Dramatic play is the chief occupation of early childhood. Children spontaneously imitate older people and their activities, such as the mother dressing and feeding her children, the policeman helping pedestrians across the street, the motorman, and the postman; and they dramatize incidents from stories, funny papers, and movies. Through these activities the child identifies himself with other people, interprets their actions, and possibly unconsciously prepares himself for the fundamental activities of later life. The interest aroused and the vital type of experiences derived from dramatic play suggest its suitability as an instructional medium in those phases of the curriculum which are rich in people and incident, real or imagined—particularly social studies and literature. Through dramatic play the children gain richer understanding, experience in social behavior and leadership, stimulation for the imagination, training in language, pure enjoyment, and emotional release.

Spontaneous, undirected dramatic play is used in the kindergarten and first grade. Children are provided with an environment that stimulates play—blocks, toys, costumes—and allowed to choose freely, the purpose being to discover interests and to develop independence and resourcefulness, the ability to think, and relations with other children. For the most part, however, some direction to play is given by pointing to a particular topic under study, such as home life. In a unit on the airport, for example, after some discussion of the movements of a plane, the duties of workers, and the responsibilities of passengers, the children freely selected particular phases for representation. Some children represented passengers getting tickets, making reservations, weighing baggage, and giving the baggage to a porter.



tugboat made contact with the liner and pushed it safely into its berth. The sea provided the sound effects of *ssssshhhhh*.

**Pantomime.** In pantomime the child expresses ideas and feelings by action, gestures, and facial expression without speaking; any lines to be spoken or read are done so by another child. Pantomime demands less of the performer in oral expression but more in physical expression. It offers a useful variation of experience in the early stages of dramatic development, and is especially valuable for the shy child who finds oral expression difficult. Pantomime gives the child confidence in acting and prepares for the more natural and interpretative expression in other forms of dramatization.

For young children, simple two- or three-sentence stories printed on oaktag cards by the teacher and distributed to the class or to a group of children for acting out may provide fun and promote reading and physical expression. Such a story as "I am a cat; I drink some milk; and then I wash my face" may be interpreted by one child while the others guess what he is playing. Sometimes children dramatize their own stories.

The following Hallowe'en poem, written by a group of children, was dramatized repeatedly by different individuals, each giving another interpretation. Usually the class repeated the poem in unison with appropriately sepulchral tones.

Around the corner  
Of my house  
Came a weird looking witch.  
She wore a tall hat,  
A black gown,  
And on her shoulder  
Perched a fierce black cat.  
She rapped upon my window;  
Then swiftly flew away.

**Informal Dramatization.** Dramatic play and pantomime gradually merge into a stage which may be identified as informal dramatization; that is, any informal acting out of a story, rhyme, or life situation involving a series of related incidents and produced by several members of the group. Informal dramatization is characterized by spontaneity, simplicity of organization, and natural expression. Speeches are not memorized, and dramatic action is not dictated or molded into a fixed pattern; variations in performance appear in each repetition. The acting itself may be done by one child or several. The teacher may be conscious of a secondary goal, but to the children the play is self-sustaining and it is self-sufficient. The initiation of a play may be suggested by the teacher or may be simply the

spontaneous desire of the children to have a play. The values of informal dramatization are the development of fluency, spontaneity, imagination, originality, and a social spirit.\*

A primary group had dramatized "The Three Bears," "Little Red Riding Hood," and "The Three Billy Goats Gruff" when the teacher suggested that it might be fun to make up a play of their own and act it out. She appointed a committee consisting of two boys and two girls, with Ann as chairman. The teacher suggested that they have a meeting in the morning before school to make up their play and, if they needed additional characters, to choose them from the class. She gave no instructions as to what the play should be about; she did suggest, however, that it would be better to have only a few characters—four or five.

The next morning Ann was at school earlier than usual; and as her committee members arrived, they joined her in a far corner of the room, where they talked animatedly for a time. Then Ann asked two other children to join them. After another short conference, Ann came to the teacher to say that they had made up the play and would like to rehearse privately. The teacher took them to a small room on another floor and left them there. In about fifteen minutes the committee returned to the classroom with the announcement that the play was ready whenever there was time to put it on. They were told that at 2 P.M. there would be time; and this appointment was written on the bulletin board, causing a ripple of anticipation around the class.

When the time arrived, Ann took charge. Props consisted of school furniture arranged to suggest a schoolroom at one side of the room and a home at the other side. A bit of realism was added by means of a window-stick tree midway between the home and the school.

When all was ready, Ann announced, "We're going to give a play called 'Schooltime.' Alfred is the dog, Blackie; Garth is the cat, Spot; Marlyne and Susan are schoolgirls; Alice is the mother; I'm the teacher in the school." Ann then took her place at the school side of the room, and the play began.

MOTHER (*shaking the two schoolgirls*): Wake up, children. Wake up! Get ready for school.

MARLYNE: My, I'm sleepy.

SUSAN: I don't want to get up yet.

MOTHER: But you must. Come, get dressed. Here, eat your breakfast.

(*Children dress and eat hurriedly.*)

CHILDREN: Good-by, Mother.

MOTHER: Good-by. Be good, children.

*(Dog barks and cavorts around. Cat mews and rubs against girls. Children walk to school—across the room—and stop to pick flowers on the way.)*

TEACHER: Good morning, children.

CHILDREN: Good morning.

TEACHER: Take your seats. We must get right at our work.

*(Teacher puts an addition problem on the board. Dog begins to bark on the school steps. Cat arrives and mews.)*

TEACHER *(goes to door)*: Go home! Go on home! You're a naughty dog and cat. Girls, why don't you shut your dog up?

*(Dog and cat go slowly across room toward home.)*

TEACHER: Marlyne, come and work this problem.

*(Marlyne goes to board and works the problem.)*

TEACHER: Susan, you may correct it.

*(Susan marks it C.)*

TEACHER: Now, girls, we will read.

*(Girls get books and read aloud. Dog and cat create disturbance at school door and are again driven home. Reading continues, girls taking turns.)*

TEACHER: School is over now. Put on your coats. Susan, where are your mittens?

SUSAN: In my pocket.

TEACHER: Better put them on. Good-by, girls.

GIRLS: Good-by.

*(Girls skip home, where dog and cat bark and mew their welcome.)*

MOTHER: Eat your supper now, girls, and go right to bed.

GIRLS: Good night, Mother.

MOTHER: Good night.

The class applauded, for they liked the play. In the discussion that followed, suggestions and criticisms were made: "I liked the way the dog, Alfred, stood on his hind legs." "I liked the way the cat kept trying to sneak out. That was funny." "Ann made a good teacher." "That was a good play. It was funny." "I think there might have been more talking." "I couldn't hear quite all that Alice said."

For this first attempt at original play production, the children had wisely chosen a simple theme with which they were familiar. There was nothing unusual about the vocabulary, sentence structure, story, or acting, but because the audience approved, the committee was pleased; and the teacher felt that the work as a committee—the feeling of responsibility, the sharing and pooling of ideas—had made the undertaking worthwhile. One of the characters was an extremely self-effacing little girl who had never volunteered for anything, but because she wanted to help Ann and the committee and probably because the theme was such a simple, thoroughly familiar one, did her part remarkably well. Imagination and ingenuity were taxed in setting and props, and in the end such great satisfaction was

felt that another committee was appointed to make up another play for the next day.

A fifth-grade class that had been studying China, Japan, and California was asked to demonstrate the culmination of a unit of work in the social studies. Apparently quite disconnected, the three areas of the unit were brought together by means of a dramatization that took the form of a joint meeting of chambers of commerce of the three countries in the attempt to work out trade agreements. The representatives of each country were prepared to say what they wanted to buy and what they had to sell. Good sales talks required some explanation of the quality of their products and reasons for their superiority.

Often one finds one or two children who, if given free rein, will develop unsuspected powers of leadership or originality in periods of informal dramatization, and the class will be carried along by their enthusiasm. As long as the experience shows growth and steady improvement, all is well. Not only must enunciation, pronunciation, vocabulary, and usage be watched but also there must be steady improvement in dialogue, in the quality of subject matter chosen, and in acting. If and when the experience begins to degenerate into mere silliness, then of course it is time to stop.

**Puppets.** Puppets offer a variety of dramatic activity suitable for any grade level. In the primary grades clay animals, clothespin dolls, and cardboard figures are used as simple puppets; and the situations and stories are simple in plot. In the upper grades the puppets are more complex in construction, often dressed in costumes; a stage and stage settings are provided; and the play includes a number of scenes, several characters, and more mature dialogue. In the puppet shows the necessity for a pupil's personal appearance before the class and for bodily action is eliminated; the effectiveness of the production depends mainly on the use of the voice and the manipulation of the puppets. The extremely shy child who finds natural, face-to-face expression difficult or impossible may express himself quite freely when concealed behind the screen; even speech defects may disappear. With younger children puppetry provides opportunity to indulge in make-believe; for older children it motivates close study of factual material to portray accurately dress, customs, and language. It stimulates inventiveness, creativity, and individuality and provides some training in manipulative skills. It encourages clear enunciation and the vivid portrayal of feeling by the manipulation of the voice. It is adaptable to various phases of the school program, especially literature, social studies, and health.

A class of third graders decided, in the early winter, when colds became prevalent, to deal with the prevention of colds and use puppets in the



Fig. 5-2. Puppets. (Courtesy of Hazel Lambert)

dramatization. Puppets were made to represent Charles, Juanita, a school nurse, Mr. Germ, and his helper Mr. Careless. Charles and Juanita were planning to go to a picnic, when Mr. Germ and Mr. Careless put in their appearance and tried to break up their plans. The school nurse appeared and saved the day by banishing Mr. Germ and Mr. Careless. Juanita and Charles went happily on their way.

**Formal Dramatization.** Formal dramatization is characterized by more thorough planning of plot, characterization, lines, staging, and costumes. A play written by the children, provides a good opportunity for the intensive study of a particular topic or theme as well as for dramatic experience. Writing plays is a form of creative experience and is treated as such in Chapter 6. Producing plays prepared by others, although it provides an opportunity to study dramatic form and, of course, to interpret, lacks the richness of educative experience that writing plays provides. The occasion for formal dramatization is usually entertainment, and the teacher and pupils are often tempted to sacrifice educational values to entertainment values. The temptation is to use a few good performers, probably those who least need the training; to limit freedom of thought and expression; to waste time in repetition; and to waste time and money in preparing elaborate costumes. The ingenious teacher will find ways of minimizing if not



Fig. 5-3. Formal dramatization. (Courtesy of Congdon Campus School, Potsdam, N.Y.)

eliminating these dangers, keeping the idea before the pupils and the public that the chief business of the school is to promote learning, not to provide professional entertainment.

**Specific Objectives.** It must be apparent that dramatization presents highly motivated situations that create immediate needs for, and provide training in, many of the basic language abilities and oral skills. Brown and Butterfield say, "As a language activity, dramatization may have many values; in fact, it is difficult to think of any of the fundamental aims of oral language which cannot be realized by means of dramatization."<sup>4</sup> But dramatization places more emphasis on some aims than on others. First, performers must make themselves heard and understood; sufficient volume and clear enunciation are demanded. Second, flexibility of voice and emphasis is required to express different feelings and to portray characters. "The class is quick to recognize that it is ever so much more fun if Father Bear has a great, big, gruff voice and Baby Bear has a tiny, squeaky voice."<sup>5</sup> Third, dramatization on the higher levels requires attention to organization, dividing the play into scenes, and planning a natural sequence. Fourth, the representation of characters and the expression of

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

mood require suitable bodily action and facial expression, desirable qualities in many forms of oral language. Mobility of expression adds vitality and interest. Participation in dramatization tends to loosen the bonds caused by repression and shyness. Fifth, if freedom of expression is allowed, children will use expressive language—vigorous, aptly descriptive words and phrases. In reproductions and in dramatization of original stories new words will appear. Sixth, dramatization provides opportunities for two specific kinds of language experience: conversation and discussion. Practice in conversation is provided by dramatic dialogue. Discussion is an essential part of the informal types of procedures, handled in a democratic manner, for planning and producing the play.

**Purposeful Occasions.** The enjoyment of literature offers many opportunities for dramatization. A satisfactory story for dramatization (1) moves rapidly from one well-marked episode to another, (2) has three or four distinct scenes or acts, (3) has four or five speaking parts, (4) requires only simple stage properties, and (5) often includes repetition of rhyme or a bit of dramatic dialogue. At the kindergarten level, many Mother Goose rhymes are suitable for dramatization, such as "Little Miss Muffet," "Little Boy Blue," and "Jack Be Nimble." Appropriate stories for the primary grades are: "Peter Rabbit," "The Tortoise and the Hare," "The Three Bears," and "The Straw Ox." Children in the upper grades enjoy the dramatization of selections from such books as Sir James M. Barrie's *Peter and Wendy*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies*, Howard Pyle's *Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and Howard Pyle's *The Story of King Arthur and His Knights*.

Informal dramatizations are a natural part of the story hour and the reading period. Special occasions are offered by the celebration of special days, book week, and programs.

Many situations arise in the social studies, science, and health work in which dramatization is useful as a means of clarifying ideas and adding interest. In the primary grades children play house, operate an airport, manage a grocery, and play doctor and nurse; they show how to cross a street safely and how to choose a good lunch. In the upper grades the dramatizations are more complex, showing how the pioneers lived, how the westward movement progressed, how the Constitutional Convention was conducted. They may cover single incidents or situations or topics of considerable scope, and are an excellent means of vividly highlighting and tying together important phases of a unit of work; they are a culminating

a three-cornered hat, improvised from newspaper, supplies a colonial soldier's costume. Children find such impromptu inventions satisfactory for informal dramatizations in school.

Formal dramatizations, which are often used as entertainments for the public, require more elaborate stage sets, costumes, and properties. The annual or semiannual show put on by the school is a tradition in many small communities. Often teachers invite parents on some special occasion—for a special day celebration or at the completion of a large unit of work. Impressing the public with the importance of the activity itself may justify the time and effort devoted to elaborate staging. The teacher will naturally try to tie the construction phases of dramatization into work in art and industrial arts so that the children will receive the maximum benefits. Often the construction of scenery, properties, and costumes motivates close study and the gathering of exact information. Teachers should not be required to waste the time of children in educationally unproductive enterprises intended solely for entertainment.

**Processes.** The first step in dramatization, as in other language experiences, is to set up a present, worthy occasion—a story, incident, or situation that is appropriate to the work under way and appealing to the children. If it is a story, the second step is to bring the children to an understanding of the narrative, which is told or read by the teacher or read by a pupil. The reading and enjoyment of the story may lead to a request or suggestion for dramatization. The third step involves planning the dramatization, and therefore often requires a rereading of the story, in whole or in part, one or more times in the course of planning. It is likewise necessary to divide the story into scenes or acts, determined by place, time, or incident, and to arrange a natural sequence. The parts to be played are identified, and actors are chosen for them. The children who try out may be selected by the class or by the teacher. A stage manager or announcer is chosen, and possibly his duties are discussed. Staging and properties are planned. The group or several groups meet to discuss, plan, and prepare their parts. The play is then presented by the group. Audience evalu-



dramatization at the intermediate-grade level. It must be simplified considerably for use in lower grades and must be adapted to the requirements of particular situations at any grade level. Formal dramatization follows the same general steps, the chief differences lying in thoroughness and polish.

**Problems.** In the early stages of dramatization children are often handicapped by inexperience and shyness. The novelty and freedom of the activity may intoxicate certain children who have been accustomed to rigid formality; it may seem strange and funny to them at first. Dramatization may in such cases be introduced as a new kind of work, an activity requiring earnest and sincere effort and placing new responsibilities on performers and audience. It may be extended as a privilege only to those who are ready to take their work seriously, but it can be gradually made more informal as pupils become accustomed to it and find it enjoyable and worth continuing. Considerable teacher direction is necessary at first, and pedagogical patience is required until student shyness wears away and freedom and naturalness are attained. Growth should appear in the enjoyment of the children, in sincerity and naturalness, and in the quality of performance.

A second problem grows out of what to do with the body of the class while a single group is preparing and performing a play. In the procedure outlined above, the whole class is active in the preliminary steps and in the final evaluation. Larger numbers can be kept active by having several groups simultaneously prepare the play, the participants working in another room or in another part of the classroom. The nonperformers can be impressed with their importance as friendly, constructive critics and directors; and at times they can be given something else to do, such as making drawings to show how scenes may be handled, or performing work in another area. The interest of the class need not be lost unless the play is repeated too often by the same performers. The frequent changing of even one character will tend to keep alive the interest of the class, since practically every child secretly or openly hopes to take part; and each new player will introduce a fresh bit of conversation.

This question of repetition raises another problem, which should be decided only according to the enjoyment of pupils, who may or may not call for many repetitions of favorite plays. Repetition, therefore, should not be forced for secondary values, such as training in language and in stage behavior. Formal dramatization, used as public program material, requires much rehearsing. Such rehearsal should be done outside the class or, if this is impossible, the pupils not performing should be given some-

a three-cornered hat, improvised from newspaper, supplies a colonial soldier's costume. Children find such impromptu inventions satisfactory for informal dramatizations in school.

Formal dramatizations, which are often used as entertainments for the public, require more elaborate stage sets, costumes, and properties. The annual or semiannual show put on by the school is a tradition in many small communities. Often teachers invite parents on some special occasion—for a special day celebration or at the completion of a large unit of work. Impressing the public with the importance of the activity itself may justify the time and effort devoted to elaborate staging. The teacher will naturally try to tie the construction phases of dramatization into work in art and industrial arts so that the children will receive the maximum benefits. Often the construction of scenery, properties, and costumes motivates close study and the gathering of exact information. Teachers should not be required to waste the time of children in educationally unproductive enterprises intended solely for entertainment.

**Processes.** The first step in dramatization, as in other language experiences, is to set up a present, worthy occasion—a story, incident, or situation that is appropriate to the work under way and appealing to the children. If it is a story, the second step is to bring the children to an understanding of the narrative, which is told or read by the teacher or read by a pupil. The reading and enjoyment of the story may lead to a request or suggestion for dramatization. The third step involves planning the dramatization, and therefore often requires a rereading of the story, in whole or in part, one or more times in the course of planning. It is likewise necessary to divide the story into scenes or acts, determined by place, time, or incident, and to arrange a natural sequence. The parts to be played are identified, and actors are chosen for them. The children who try out may be selected by the class or by the teacher. A stage manager or announcer is chosen, and possibly his duties are discussed. Staging and properties are planned. The group or several groups meet to discuss, plan, and prepare their parts. The play is then presented by the group. Audience evaluation follows. Because the whole class, presumably, is familiar with the basic source of the play and has engaged in preliminary planning, all members are ready to judge the fidelity of content, dialogue, setting, and general interpretation. Suggestions for improvement and demonstrations of these suggestions are sincerely sought. Re-presentation of the dramatization for enjoyment or for improvement of the performance may be desired by the class as a final step; the same group or another group may perform. The procedure just described is suitable for an informal type of group

training in the mechanics of speech—use of the speech organs, voice placement, breathing, sounding letters, and use of pauses and modulation as indicated in part by punctuation.

**Processes.** The approach to choral speaking is rich and extensive enjoyment of poetic and dramatic literature read by the teacher. Enjoyment in listening leads naturally to, and sets the stage for, active participation for further and richer enjoyment. The choice of selections in beginning work is important. Professor Mary Gwen Owen says, "Choose something which has a terrifically 'unpoetic' sound when read, something which will appeal to the boys. If the boys like it, the girls will too." \* (Such a poem is Vachel Lindsay's "The Congo.")

The first step is an impressive reading of the whole selection by the teacher or by some gifted pupil prepared for the job. Rereading may be requested by the class. Pupils may then be invited to participate in the reading.

When a decision for class participation has been made, the second step involves noting the mood, thought, or particular feeling that the selection creates. Then follows casting and the arrangement of parts. Casting a poem means simply deciding how to read it—in unison, in solo and chorus, a line a child, a line a chorus, antiphonally; and then deciding how the particular lines shall be distributed. Once the children have an idea of what is expected, they will help with the casting, and many variations may be tried out. A simple arrangement is to divide the class into three groups—high, low, and medium voices—with eight to twelve members in each group. In addition, there may be one or more solo parts. The high voices usually ask questions and take the lines suggesting delicacy, lightness, or fun. The low voices answer questions and carry the lines suggesting gloom, sorrow, mystery, and solemnity. Medium voices carry the narrative, give explanations, and introduce characters. A solo voice may speak from either group or may move a little apart from the group when speaking, but there should never be too much moving.

The teacher should study the selection beforehand for possible arrangements, but the children should be allowed to make suggestions. Often surprisingly good ones are made. By sharing responsibility children learn to make earnest efforts at understanding the selection and to make intelligent use of dramatic techniques to get desired effects; they also derive a sense of proprietorship, which stimulates them to reach high standards. The complexity of arrangement varies with the age-grade-maturity level. In

\* Mary Gwen Owen, *So You Don't Like Choral Reading*, A Monograph of Language Arts, no. 52, Row, Peterson & Company, Evanston, Ill., n.d., p. 3.

thing else to do and should not be expected to pay attention to the extent of wasting time.

It cannot be overemphasized that, from the point of view of modern linguistics, the training of expression must be free, natural, and spontaneous. Memorization or parrotlike repetition of lines and formal acting defeat the primary purpose. Variations in language, interpretation, and stage behavior should be encouraged.

### CHORAL SPEAKING

Verse choir, choral speaking, unison speaking, choric work, and speaking choir are all names for the same thing—a group of voices speaking poetry or rhythmic literature together, with unity and beauty. In many ways it is like a singing choir. However, in a singing choir emphasis is on tone quality, and words are often blurred. In a speaking choir, although there must be good tone quality, the main emphasis is on enunciation; every word must be clear and expressive. A really fine verse choir shows a singing quality of voice, and the blend of many voices can bring out unsuspected melodies of poems.

Speaking poetry in unison is not new. It was done in ancient Greece, where plays were odes chanted by a chorus, or later with a leader; but the chorus was always important. The Old Testament is full of passages which were probably rendered in this way, and in our modern churches we still carry on the chant or responsive reading, which is choral speaking. What can be more stirring than the Twenty-fourth Psalm read by a solo reader and chorus! The old ballads were recited by a leader carrying the narrative, while the chorus thumped and chanted the response. Certain American Indian ceremonial chants followed this solo-chorus pattern.

**Specific Objectives.** In addition to the enjoyment of literature (the primary outcome) and other literary and general social-training values, the chief values for language training relate to improving voice and speech. Requirements of clear enunciation and pronunciation are exacting if the total effect is to be distinct and pleasing, not blurred. Richness and fullness of tone are essential. Flexibility of voice is required for force and pleasing effects. These qualities of speech are not attained through the mechanical direction of the teacher, but through an effort at intelligent interpretation and an attempt to express by tone, pitch, and modulation of voice ideas and feelings that are clearly understood and felt. The material dictates its interpretation. The necessity of getting desired effects through the use of the voice provides opportunities for giving some understanding of and

SOLO: Oh no!  
 Not so!  
 For I always dream  
 Of a dish  
 Full of fish  
 And a bowl  
 Full of cream!

The following is a poem written by eight-year-olds and used for verse speaking many times. Different castings were planned by the children and used, but they seemed to like this one best.

#### JACK FROST

ALL: Jack Frost will be coming soon.  
 FIRST VOICE: He'll kill the flowers that are now in bloom.  
 SECOND VOICE: He'll spill his paint on bushes and trees.  
 THIRD VOICE: He'll stiffen the grass and the ground will freeze.  
 FOURTH VOICE: Our gardens will soon be wilted and dead.  
 FIFTH VOICE: We'll have to put hats upon our heads,  
 SIXTH VOICE: And wear our scarfs, our rubbers, and mittens,  
 ALL: And play indoors with our three little kittens.

The children had so much fun with the little rhyme that they made music for it; but it was soon noticed that, even when they sang it, they unconsciously took parts, speaking instead of singing.

In a more formal type of choral speaking program, to relax the body and speech organs and to develop breath control, children are put through a series of preliminary exercises such as sounding the vowels with full, rich tones; breathing deeply and blowing an imaginary feather; extending the tongue and flexing the lips. It seems to be wise to subordinate such formal training exercises to the actual speaking and reading of selections and to use exercises only as needed for more effective results. The formal procedure seems a little artificial, and possibly its results may not carry over into the activity that follows.

With young children it is sometimes difficult, at first, to get the class to pay attention to the leader and, in unison work, to keep the voice quality uniform. One or two children in a group will try to make their voices heard above the others. Anticipating this difficulty, one primary teacher sought and gained permission for her class to listen in from the balcony while a large college chorus rehearsed. The children saw how intently the college people watched their leader and how they responded to her signals. It was noted that, except in solo parts, no one voice was heard above the others but that all blended in harmony. It was explained to the children that although this was a singing chorus and theirs was a *speaking*

the primary grades the work is largely concert reading. In the intermediate and upper grades elaborate arrangements are fun. Care should be taken in selecting children for the solo parts; several should try out. Sometimes children are grouped and reseeded according to the pitch of their voices—low, medium, and high.

Preliminary, tentative groupings and arrangements are followed by evaluation of results and revision of procedure, a possible third stage. Each part of the selection is studied to discover its particular mood, feeling, or idea; and attention is given to the best way to express it. Variations are tried, and better procedures are selected.

When a satisfactory interpretation has been reached, the selection may be repeated for enjoyment and practice. The number and timing of repetitions are determined by the enjoyment of the children. A growing repertory of familiar selections can be used again and again throughout the year.

**Problems.** A problem may exist in getting choral speaking under way. A beginning can be made by simply reading together or by reciting a familiar poem together. An easy variation is to add an occasional solo voice. As satisfaction and confidence build up, group work can be added and increasingly ambitious arrangements can be attempted. A beginning can well be made in the kindergarten or first grade. Here, and possibly in the second grade, children should learn to appreciate poetry and to build toward a choir but should do no formal choral speaking. They should be allowed to hop, skip, beat, and act out Mother Goose and other poems in different rhythms. Because the children will imitate the teacher, she must exercise great care in her rendering of poems and guard against singsong; and when the children, after hearing a poem a few times, begin to say it along with her, she must keep their tones light, maintain the tempo, and discourage loud voices and extreme dramatics. She should help them cultivate an ear for rhythm and for the music of the poem.

A first grade or kindergarten may begin with a simple two-part dramatization. In the following little poem, one child may act the part of the cat responding after the group addresses him:<sup>1</sup>

ALL: Little cat,  
 Little cat,  
 As you sat  
 On the mat  
 Did you dream  
 Of a mouse  
 Or a great big rat?

<sup>1</sup> From *I Have a Song to Sing You*, by Laura E. Richards, copyright, 1938, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1938. Reprinted by permission of the publishers

"Wait." Then it was read in unison, becoming more exciting with each reading until the final word became a lusty shout. The children were actually saving a little brother or sister.

On succeeding days the poem was experimented with until the children decided they liked it best as follows:

FIRST VOICE: Don't cross!  
 SECOND VOICE: Don't cross!  
 ALL: A car is coming.  
 THIRD VOICE: Don't cross!  
 FOURTH VOICE: Don't cross!  
 ALL: A car is coming.  
 FIFTH VOICE: It's skidding and sliding.  
                   It's slipping and gliding.  
 SIXTH VOICE: Don't cross!  
 SEVENTH VOICE: Don't cross!  
 ALL (shout): Wait!

The solo voices were scattered about the room, and each child became increasingly dramatic with his "Don't cross." On the final "Wait!" the group invariably leaned forward or made some involuntary gesture to add emphasis.

From time to time suggestions were offered by children or teacher, changes were made, and there had to be a bit of drill on final *t*'s and *ing*'s.

Given in assembly before first and second graders, this spontaneous little project became a real contribution to the school safety-education program. Throughout the year, many such opportunities are offered. It is for the alert teacher to recognize and take advantage of them.

**Examples.** Following are simple poems \* which have been found to work out well in choral work. The castings indicated are merely suggestions; numerous variations are possible.

The first poem, for primary children, should be spoken at a marching tempo. One-half of the class says the first four lines; the other half, the last four lines, picking up in perfect rhythm. Or, the class can try beginning softly, growing louder, and then fading away.

\* May Hill Arbuthnot, "The Grand Old Duke of York," "Blow Wind Blow," and "A Farmer Went Trotting," *Time for Poetry*, Scott, Foresman and Company, Chicago, 1951, pp. 170, 311, 224; quoted with special permission of the publisher. Rose Fyleman, "The Goblin," *Picture Rhymes from Foreign Lands*, I. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1935; copyright, 1935, by Rose Fyleman, reprinted by permission of the publisher. Kate Greenaway, "Little Wind," *Under the Window*, Frederick Warne & Co., Ltd., London n.d., p. 155. Langston Hughes, "African Dance," *The Dream Keeper*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1932; reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. E. H. Sechrist, "Is John Smith Within?" *One Thousand Poems for Children*, Macrae Smith Co., Philadelphia, 1946; by permission from E. H. Sechrist.

chorus, the same rules prevailed for both. From this experience the children seemed to gain some understanding of what unison work was all about. Any church or adult chorus or choir can be visited in this way.

Memorization is a by-product of choral speaking. There is no need for formal memorization, particularly in the lower grades. Actually, children unconsciously learn many poems and parts of poems simply by repetition in choral speaking. However, the purpose of choral speaking is to enjoy poetry, not to learn it by heart. Occasionally, for program purposes, it may be necessary to memorize selections, and incidental learning can then be completed by purposeful repetition.

Systematic memorization, if used, follows a whole-part-whole pattern. First, there is a full understanding of the main feeling, thought, or mood of the selection, arrived at through one or more thoughtful readings of the whole. Then the main thought elements are noted and fixed in mind. In the third phase, attention is given to the way the several thoughts are expressed in words, phrases, and sentences. Fourth, the child repeats as much of the selection as possible, checking with the text and making corrections. Fifth, the whole selection is repeated in correct form several times and at intervals.

One winter morning a lower-grade teacher remarked that, because drivers could not control their cars on slippery streets, children should be extra-cautious about crossing. A child told of having stopped a kindergarten who was about to dash out into the street.

"I had to yell at him two or three times. A car was coming and it was slipping all over," explained the boy.

"Let's each pretend we are stopping a little brother or sister from crossing the street," said the teacher. "What would we say? How would we say it?"

She turned to the board and in a few minutes the following lines were written as the children suggested them.

Don't cross! Don't cross!  
A car is coming.  
Don't cross! Don't cross!  
A car is coming.  
It's skidding and sliding.  
It's slipping and gliding.  
Don't cross! Don't cross!  
*Wait!*

Several individuals read it from the board with slightly varying interpretations, but all emphasizing the important words "Don't cross" and



FIRST: A raven cried, "Croak!" and they all tumbled down,  
 SECOND: Bumpety, bumpety, bump!  
 FIRST: The mare broke her knees, and the farmer his crown,  
 SECOND: Lumpety, lumpety, lump!  
 FIRST: The mischievous raven flew laughing away,  
 SECOND: Bumpety, bumpety, bump!  
 FIRST: And vowed he would serve them the same next day,  
 SECOND: Lumpety, lumpety, lump!

AFRICAN DANCE  
 (By Langston Hughes)

LOW: The low beating of the tom-toms,  
 The slow beating of the tom-toms  
 Low—slow  
 Slow—low  
 Stirs your blood.  
 HIGH: Dance!  
 A night-veiled girl  
 Whirls softly into a  
 Circle of light.  
 Whirls softly—slowly,  
 Like a wisp of smoke around the fire.  
 LOW: And the tom-toms beat,  
 And the tom-toms beat,  
 And the low beating of the tom-toms  
 ALL: Stirs your blood.

IS JOHN SMITH WITHIN?  
 (Mother Goose)

FIRST: "Is John Smith within?"  
 SECOND: "Yes, that he is."  
 FIRST: "Can he set a shoe?"  
 SECOND: "Aye, marry two."  
 ALL: Here a nail and there a nail,  
 Tick, tack, too.

For older children, a poem such as the following may prove challenging. A possible casting is suggested, any one of several that might be used.\*

A PRAYER IN THE TIME OF NEED

ALL: Give us, O Lord, we pray thee,  
 A breed of men like mountains,  
 Who lift their foreheads freely to the sun;  
 FIRST VOICE: Crown them with loving kindness  
 And with gratitude that they are sons of thine;

\* By permission from Marjory Medary, *Horn Book Magazine*, July, 1950, 26:299.

## THE GRAND OLD DUKE OF YORK

*(Mother Goose)*

The grand old Duke of York,  
 He had ten thousand men.  
 He marched them up a very high hill  
 And he marched them down again.  
 And when he was up, he was up,  
 And when he was down, he was down,  
 And when he was only half way up  
 He was neither up nor down.

## BLOW WIND BLOW

*(Mother Goose)*

Blow, wind, blow, and go, mill, go,  
 That the miller may grind his corn;  
 That the baker may take it,  
 And into bread bake it,  
 And bring us a loaf in the morn.

## THE GOBLIN

*(By Rose Fyleman)*

ALL OR HIGH: A goblin lives in *our* house, in *our* house, in *our* house.  
 A goblin lives in *our* house all the year round.  
 GIRLS OR LOW: He bumps  
 And he jumps  
 And he thumps  
 And he stumps.  
 BOYS OR MEDIUM: He knocks  
 And he rocks  
 And he rattles at the locks,  
 ALL OR HIGH: A goblin lives in *our* house, in *our* house, in *our* house.  
 A goblin lives in *our* house all the year round.

## LITTLE WIND

*(By Kate Greenaway)*

FIRST: Little Wind, blow on the hilltop.  
 SECOND: Little Wind, blow down the plain.  
 THIRD: Little Wind, blow up the sunshine.  
 ALL: Little Wind, blow off the rain.

## A FARMER WENT TROTTING

*(Mother Goose)*

FIRST: A farmer went trotting upon his gray mare,  
 SECOND: Bumpety, bumpety, bump!  
 FIRST: With his daughter behind him so rosy and fair,  
 SECOND: Lumpety, lumpety, lump!

- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, pp. 86-98, 253-259.
- and Frieda H. Dingee: *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 35-36.
- Gullan, Marjorie, and P. Gurrey: *Poetry Speaking for Children*, Methuen & Co., Ltd., London, 1931, parts 1 and 2.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, pp. 35-36, 119, 121, 151-153.
- Herrick, Virgil E., and Leland B. Jacobs: *Children and the Language Arts*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955, chap. 15.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp. 264, 302-306.
- Keppie, Elizabeth E., and others: *Speech Improvement through Choral Speaking*, Expression Company, Magnolia, Mass., 1942.
- Kramer, Bettina, and others: "Dramatic Role Playing and Book Making in the Library," *Elementary English*, January, 1956, 13:41-43.
- Müller, E. F.: "Dramatization and the Language Arts Program," *Elementary English*, January, 1952, 29:14-18.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, pp. 252-254, 314-315.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 92, 121-123, 131, 182-183.
- Pierson, Howard: "Pupils, Teachers, and Creative Dramatics," *Elementary English*, February, 1955, 32:82-89.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, chap. 17.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 72-73, 186.
- Werner, Lorna S.: *Speech in the Elementary School*, Row, Peterson & Company, Evanston, Ill., 1947, chap. 5.

- SECOND VOICE:      Robe them, we pray, with true majesty  
                              Which wears the ermine clean and undefiled,  
                              Constant in service for the common good,  
                              As glaciers feed the rivers and the soil.
- ALL:                    Raise up, O Lord, we beg thee,  
                              A breed of mountain men.

In the lilting lines of the "Skating Song" there is fun and action. The repetition of the sound words makes possible a delightful choric expression.<sup>10</sup>

#### SKATING SONG

(By Nancy Byrd Turner)

- ALL:      Zinn! Zann!—we're up and we're gone,  
               Faster and faster. The world spins on  
               Under our feet, and the cold air sings.
- SOLO:      Who would bother to be a bird  
               When the long, keen note of the ice is heard  
               And the hard steel whines and rings,
- ALL:      And zinn, zann! zinn, zann!

#### EXERCISES

1. Make a list of occasions, curricular and cocurricular, which are likely to arise in one grade and in which dramatization may be used effectively.
2. Make plans for a dramatization in a particular class-grade situation.
3. Plan a choral-speaking lesson for a particular class, giving attention to occasion, selections, possible arrangements, and procedure.
4. Make a collection of verse and prose selections suitable for choral speaking at a particular grade level. Work out a tentative casting for several, and try them out in your college class.

#### REFERENCES

- Adams, Fay: *Educating America's Children*, The Ronald Press Company, New York, 1946, pp. 336-339.
- Broening, Angela M., and others: *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, chaps. 11-12.
- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, chaps. 6-8.
- Crosby, Muriel: "Creative Dramatics as a Developmental Process," *Elementary English*, January, 1956, 13:13-18.
- Dawson, Mildred A: *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, pp. 62-67, 97-106.

<sup>10</sup> Nancy Byrd Turner, "Skating Song," in B. R. Buckingham, *The Children's Bookshelf*, Ginn & Company, Boston, 1934.

- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, pp. 86-98, 253-259.
- and Frieda H. Dingee: *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 35-36.
- Gullan, Marjorie, and P. Gurrey: *Poetry Speaking for Children*, Methuen & Co., Ltd., London, 1931, parts 1 and 2.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, pp. 35-36, 119, 121, 151-153.
- Herrick, Virgil E., and Leland B. Jacobs: *Children and the Language Arts*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955, chap. 15.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp. 264, 302-306.
- Keppie, Elizabeth E., and others: *Speech Improvement through Choral Speaking*, Expression Company, Magnolia, Mass., 1942.
- Kramer, Bettina, and others: "Dramatic Role Playing and Book Making in the Library," *Elementary English*, January, 1956, 13:41-43.
- Müller, E. F.: "Dramatization and the Language Arts Program," *Elementary English*, January, 1952, 29:14-18.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, pp. 252-254, 314-315.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 92, 121-123, 131, 182-183.
- Pierson, Howard: "Pupils, Teachers, and Creative Dramatics," *Elementary English*, February, 1955, 32:82-89.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, chap. 17.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 72-73, 186.
- Werner, Lorna S.: *Speech in the Elementary School*, Row, Peterson & Company, Evanston, Ill., 1947, chap. 5.

- SECOND VOICE. Robe them, we pray, with true majesty  
Which wears the ermine clean and undefiled,  
Constant in service for the common good,  
As glaciers feed the rivers and the soil.
- ALL: Raise up, O Lord, we beg thee,  
A breed of mountain men.

In the lilting lines of the "Skating Song" there is fun and action. The repetition of the sound words makes possible a delightful choric expression.<sup>10</sup>

SKATING SONG  
(By Nancy Byrd Turner)

- ALL: Zinng! Zannng!—we're up and we're gone,  
Faster and faster. The world spins on  
Under our feet, and the cold air sings.
- SOLO: Who would bother to be a bird  
When the long, keen note of the ice is heard  
And the hard steel whines and rings,
- ALL: And zinng, zannng! zinng, zannng!

## EXERCISES

1. Make a list of occasions, curricular and cocurricular, which are likely to arise in one grade and in which dramatization may be used effectively.
2. Make plans for a dramatization in a particular class-grade situation.
3. Plan a choral-speaking lesson for a particular class, giving attention to occasion, selections, possible arrangements, and procedure.
4. Make a collection of verse and prose selections suitable for choral speaking at a particular grade level. Work out a tentative casting for several, and try them out in your college class.

## REFERENCES

- Adams, Fay: *Educating America's Children*, The Ronald Press Company, New York, 1946, pp. 336-339.
- Broening, Angela M., and others: *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, chaps. 11-12.
- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, chaps. 6-8.
- Crosby, Muriel: "Creative Dramatics as a Developmental Process," *Elementary English*, January, 1956, 13:13-18.
- Dawson, Mildred A: *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, pp. 62-67, 97-106.

<sup>10</sup> Nancy Byrd Turner, "Skating Song," in B. R. Buckingham, *The Children's Bookshelf*, Ginn & Company, Boston, 1934.

It must be recognized at this point that originality of expression is a desired quality of nearly all language work and that some authors and teachers regard originality as the sole quality that identifies creativeness. To these people, creativeness is a quality of all expression; it does not serve to identify a particular group of language activities. The authors agree that originality is important in much, if not quite all, of language work, but they take the position that some forms present to a greater degree than others opportunities for personal growth and for developing the qualities of language peculiar to creative expression. For practical purposes of organization and treatment in this book, it is well to identify and treat these forms as a group. Many of the experiences in the present group tap resources of feeling and imagination, but thought as well is included as a proper field for creative effort. Vivid expression and original, clear, accurate thinking are important in problems that are largely intellectual.

Hatfield says that creative expression is the translation of experience into words. What is needed is a vivid experience worthy of expression and a determined effort to verbalize it appropriately. The value of creative work lies in absorption in an experience. Hatfield points out further that creative expression is not based only upon the imagination; that real, actual, firsthand experiences are equally fertile fields. He warns that the temptation to live vicariously in the experiences of others, as in much reading, may be overpowering to some children and may interfere with facing reality. Children need to be encouraged to think and feel about things that happen to them, to recognize the worth of personal experiences, and to be courageous in putting their own thoughts and feelings into words.<sup>1</sup>

**Can Children Be Creative?** A little observation of children's expression in the preschool and even early school years should convince a skeptic that children are original and vivid in the expression of ideas peculiarly their own. In their stories and verse we find freshness and vividness. Children's interests are varied, and their naïve impressions appear in refreshingly original words: the *crust* on a banana; the *bone* inside an olive; *snapple* galoshes; *befront* is the opposite of behind; *tonow* means right now. Creativeness is the birthright of children, and it will flower and mature with the years unless stunted by unimaginative teaching. The examples of children's work in this chapter and elsewhere in the book should prove the point.

<sup>1</sup> W. W. Hatfield, *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, pp. 110-111.

## CHAPTER 6

# Creative Experiences

Much of the language training of the school, and much of the language of life outside the school, necessarily involves getting and giving information essential to the business of living. In this category would fall the oral and written communication activities discussed above and such experiences as giving information, studying, and research, topics that will be treated in the immediately following chapters. The creative writing experiences treated in this chapter—stories, plays, and articles—clearly belong in a different category. They are not concerned with the giving of information but with the expression of thoughts and feelings for their own sake or for the entertainment of others. The differentiation is found partly in the ends served and partly in the content and the handling of various language elements. "Creativity is primarily a point of view, a way of feeling about things, situations, people, the world, one's school, one's home, and a way of responding to these things in one's environment."<sup>1</sup> Content is largely concerned with the expression of personal feelings and thoughts; and imagination enters prominently, but not exclusively. Originality is an important factor; that is, the child must express his own mental or emotional reactions, not simply report the thoughts and feelings of others. But the concept of originality requires some examination. Very few thoughts are original in the sense that they are expressed for the first time; originality consists to some extent in the selection, appropriation, and adaptation of the thoughts and feelings of others. Sincerity, conviction, and personal acceptance are thus involved.

<sup>1</sup> Wilhelmina Hill and others: *How Children Can Be Creative*, U.S. Office of Education Bulletin no. 12, 1954, p. 2.



mother and father of their grandchildren—and the little boy grandchild was named Larry, the little girl grandchild was Chris. Then all of them went over to, from the station, to the grandmother's house.

After they got there they looked at the time on the clock and it was time to get supper. After it was all ready they all sat down to supper and ate. After they ate they tuned on the television, watched it, looked at the clock. It was time to put the children to bed.

She had a loose tooth, and while she was in bed at night the loose tooth came out, and in the morning she found the tooth and brought it down to Mommy and showed it to her.

Then they got dressed and went to play and had fun.

And the story is done.

John, on the other hand, did not stick to a personal experience and soon found himself more or less involved:

#### JOHN'S STORY

I won't puff you up. Except the little clown was happy I think I hear another train coming.

I'll try if I can and I will if I try Puff, puff. I almost got up.

Tracy expressed himself in rhyme—a simple experience story, but delightfully told with quite a lilt:

#### TRACY'S POEM

I'm not going to

Sit in a chair.

I'm just going to

Sit in the air.

In imaginative stories—reproductions or originals—the child identifies himself with the characters in their adventures, suffers with them, and shares with them elation in success or escape. Vivid experiencing of the real or imagined type stimulates the imagination; quickens observation; gives exercise to the emotions; develops sympathy and understanding for people and animals; leads to free, natural, imaginative expression; and may contribute to emotional stability.<sup>3</sup> This little story told by a first-grade child is quite typical of imaginative stories:

Once upon a time there was a little fairy named Tinkerville. She went out in the garden one morning and she saw a butterfly. He was caught in a spider's web. Tinkerville asked him if he was caught. He said, "Yes." So she helped him out.

**Specific Objectives.** All the general oral language objectives operate in storytelling, but particularly important are selecting a familiar experience

<sup>3</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum, *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, p. 8.

**STORYTELLING**

If children are to be at all verbally creative in the early years, it must be through oral language; individual creativeness in written work awaits the mastery of the mechanics of written expression. Of the oral language experiences, storytelling offers the best opportunities. In storytelling that deals with familiar, personal events, the child relives his experiences, interprets them, and has opportunity to give expression to his own thoughts and feelings about them.

Kindergartners' stories usually belong in the category of familiar experiences. Five-year-old Martha, in the following story, started out with bear characters but having no personal knowledge of bears, she almost immediately switched to something familiar—a trip she had taken.

**MARTHA'S STORY**

Once upon a time there was a little Oaddy bear. His name was Adam. And the Mommy bear was Eve.

One day they went on a trip to Watertown. When they got there, who do you think they saw? It was the people they were going to meet, and it was the



Fig. 6-1. Storytelling time is a time for fun in the kindergarten. (Courtesy of New York University)

of stories of personal experience that can be used as models and for stimulation. A typical list of literary source material for enjoyment and for reproduction at the several age levels follows: \*

*Six Years and Younger*

Andy and the Lion  
 Angelo, the Naughty One  
 Angus and the Ducks  
 Belinda's New Shoes  
 Bremen Town Musicians  
 The Cat and the Mouse in the Malt House  
 The Cat and the Parrot  
 Chick, Chick, Halfchick  
 The Cobbler's Tale  
 The Cock, the Mouse, and the Little Red Hen  
 Curious George Takes a Job  
 Down, Down the Mountain  
 Drakesbill and His Friends  
 The Five Chinese Brothers  
 The Funny Thing  
 Henny Penny  
 Jacoble Tells the Truth  
 Lambikin  
 Make Way for Ducklings  
 Millions of Cats

*Six to Nine Years of Age*

About the Hedgehog Who Became a Prince  
 Ah Mee's Invention  
 Aladdin, or The Wonderful Lamp  
 Atalanta's Race  
 Beauty and the Beast  
 Belling the Cat  
 Billy Beg and the Bull  
 The Black Bull of Norrway  
 Bloom-of-yough and the Witch of Elders  
 Boots and His Brothers  
 The Brave Little Tailor  
 Cap'n Dow and the Hole in the Doughnut  
 Daniel in the Lion's Den  
 East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon  
 The Great Quillow  
 How Cats Came to Purr  
 Johnny Appleseed

\* *Stories to Tell to Children*, Pittsburgh Carnegie Library, 1949, pp. 9-40. Selected.

or incident with some unusual or dramatic feature; keeping a point for the last; using concrete details and exact words; showing sincerity; expressing feeling by voice and manner; telling events in sequence; speaking directly to the audience, showing interest in one's story; and if the story is humorous, allowing the audience to carry the burden of laughter.

**Situations.** A situation suitable for storytelling, as for other creative work, is one that arouses strong, vivid thoughts or feelings, requiring expression. "Daily activities at home, school, and in the community offer continuing opportunities for creative expression. Children can be creative in the way they express ideas about things in their environment—the polliwog, the cocoon, rain, the playhouse, the scream of the fire engine's siren, the first dandelion of spring, or the factory machine.<sup>4</sup> Or, the mood for creative expression may be set by witnessing a current event or a special occasion, such as the launching of an earth satellite; by reading or hearing a story or poem; by listening to the recounting of personal experiences by the children or teacher; and by incidents and situations in learning about foreign people in the social studies.

The child must have something to say and the desire to express it; participation must be voluntary, invited but not forced. Individual differences must be recognized and respected, because the creative impulse is stronger in some children than in others. Enthusiasm is contagious and will stimulate the phlegmatic, unimaginative, shy children, if anything will. Various examples will be found in the pages following.

**Materials.** Storytelling is a natural part of the literature-appreciation phase of language work in so far as it concerns the reproduction of children's classics. In the integrated program, opportunities arise for including stories appropriate to a unit, such as Indians, colonial life, and Holland. Occasional storytelling periods, largely concerned with personal experiences, occur in the language class. Stories for reproduction should be suitable to the grade in content and have some of the following characteristics:

1. Familiarity
2. Clear, natural sequence
3. Repetition
4. Simple plot
5. Few characters

Readers, language books, courses of study, and children's storybooks provide suitable selections for reproduction; and textbooks provide examples

<sup>4</sup> Hill and others, *loc. cit.*

"I like Jimmie's descriptive words—'crystal,' 'sagging,' 'heavy.' That's the way the trees look this morning, don't they?" said the teacher.

On a windy morning when the children arrived at school, blown and breathless, there was a discussion of the strength of the wind. Questions were asked: "How does the wind make you feel?" "What are some of the things it does?" "How does it sound?" The following two poems resulted:

#### THE WIND

The wind comes roaring  
Down from the sky,  
It sweeps the snow  
And piles it high.

It whirls around the corners  
And nearly knocks us down.  
It gets behind and pushes us  
And dances round and round.

Last night the wind  
Howled wild and loud.  
"Whoo-oo-o," he cried  
And made me hide  
Under my blankets  
All safe inside.

As the second step in directing a storytelling experience the teacher may provide for further stimulation. The situation normally arising may be stimulation enough, but often the teacher finds it desirable to intensify the desire for expression by emphasizing the thought, feeling, or mood of the situation and by giving it specific direction. Thus when the subject of trees arose in a sixth-grade class in connection with the study of Joyce Kilmer's poem, the teacher had the children recall favorite trees and experiences with trees; he called attention to some pictures of trees studied by the class; he told of his observations and experiences; and he read excerpts from other poems, noting ideas and descriptive words. The direction of thinking, the mood, and appropriate words and phrases laid the basis for the pupils' own efforts. In stories relating to personal experiences of loneliness, the teacher may ask, Were you ever left alone? How did you feel? What did you do? Or the teacher may stimulate the children by showing them pictures or by giving beginning sentences and allowing them to continue the story.

A teacher's possible approach might be something like this: "How

*Older Boys and Girls*

The Apple of Contentment  
 Baby Rainstorm  
 Baldur  
 Baron Munchausen  
 Beowulf  
 The Cat That Walked by Himself  
 Circe's Palace  
 The Doughnuts  
 The Fisherman and the Genie  
 Get Up and Bar the Door  
 How Arthur Was Crowned King  
 The Magic Box  
 Paul Bunyan  
 Rikki Tikki Tavi

**Processes.** In handling a storytelling lesson or series of lessons, the teacher will first set up a situation in which storytelling is appropriate and enjoyable. He may take advantage of situations arising in the course of work in other subjects, such as the social studies, nature study, health, and literature; he may introduce a special storytelling period; or he may take advantage of some spontaneous contribution of a child. Several examples will serve to illustrate the points.

On an icy morning quiet little Dorothy raised her hand and said she would like to say a poem she had thought of on the way to school. ("I've thought of one, too," remarked Jimmie.) Dorothy's story was:

When the trees  
 Are bent low  
 With a coating of ice  
 On their branches,  
 I don't think  
 They feel very pleasant,  
 Do you?

"Dorothy has made her poem different by ending it with a question," the teacher might remark. Jimmie's story was:

The trees with their crystal  
 Coats of ice  
 Are sagging and heavy.  
 But, if the sun came out  
 They would sparkle  
 Like fairyland.

would you like to make a story? If we all work together we might make a long story. What could our story be about?"

The teacher would list on the board suggestions as children gave them: *fairy, witch, boy or girl, rabbit, pet, circus, etc.*

"We must have a good beginning sentence. One that makes us want to go on and read the rest of the story."

If no work has been done with beginning sentences, it may be well to take time out at this point to examine a few. The teacher may collect several readers, primers, preprimers, etc., and read a few beginning sentences from different books. Children will quickly label some baby stories, while stories beginning with more mature sentences will be admired. Perhaps this is as far as the lesson can go at the time. The teacher might then

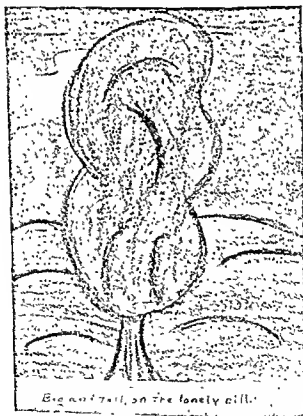


Fig. 6-2. Beginning creative expression. (Courtesy of Tidyman Studios)

After the situation has been set up, and after the preparatory step of giving specific direction to thought and feeling has been taken, the children may be ready for individual creative effort. If so, of course, they begin preparing their stories at once; but, if not, there will be further presentation and study of models. The children note and make a list of such desirable qualities as a particular thought, feeling, or mood for emphasis; words that tell exactly what one wants to say, in an interesting way; and the expression of personal thoughts and feelings.

Finally, the pupils prepare their stories, giving attention to the key points noted above. Expression is followed by discriminating criticism with primary emphasis on the major objectives of the experience: "Did you enjoy it? What contributed to the enjoyment? Could the enjoyment of the story be increased in any way?" Continued experience and practice in creative effort should result in growth and increasing maturity in the use of special techniques. Acquired abilities and skills should be consciously employed in various phases of the program whenever storytelling is appropriate.

**Problems.** The greatest difficulty in beginning creative work is to overcome natural reticence in giving expression to intimate thoughts and feelings and hesitancy about experimenting with new forms of expression. Children may not have previously been encouraged to be original and natural in expressing their thoughts freely at home and in the school. Effective means of overcoming the barrier to originality and freedom of expression include stimulating the children by the procedures noted above, so that they have something to say; setting a pattern of originality and freedom for the class as the normal and expected thing; and providing a sympathetic and appreciative audience.

When Nancy, a flighty third-grade child who had never contributed anything to the story hour, gazed out of the window and then rather solemnly pronounced this poem, she was highly complimented by the teacher, and the children signified pride in her achievement and in the fact that she had at last helped the class:

When the snowflakes  
Come dancing down,  
They look like  
Little winter fairies.

Appreciation of sincere effort of whatever degree of merit should be spontaneous and freely given. Criticism should be constructive; and it may come in part from the children, if informality prevails and if children's judgments are respected. Real worth should be recognized; too



"That is wonderful!" exclaimed Billy happily. "I won't have to color your eggs." He took the pale-blue eggs and hopped off toward Mrs. Robin's home.

He found Mrs. Robin beside her nest. She was swinging back and forth in the gentle breeze, singing a gay little tune.

"Good morning, Mrs. Robin," called Billy. "Do you happen to have any extra eggs?"

"Why, yes," chirped Mrs. Robin pleasantly. "I just laid some fresh ones, and I can let you have a couple."

That pleased Billy Rabbit so much that he gave a great hop and landed, plop—right in a puddle of soft mud.

For a minute Billy was frightened. "My eggs!" he cried. But his precious pale-blue eggs had landed safely in the brown mud beside him and were not even cracked.

Slowly Billy pulled himself out of the puddle, wiped his eggs on some long, clean grass, and then called to Mrs. Robin, "Have you your eggs ready? I must be going now."

With his arms full of eggs Billy hopped slowly down the path.

He reached the river just in time to see Mrs. Turtle burying her eggs in the soft sand. He watched her as she clawed sand over the little white eggs and then, just as she started slowly toward the water, Billy called, "Oh Mrs. Turtle! Mrs. Turtle! Please wait a minute. May I have a few of your eggs for Easter?"

"Of course!" replied Mrs. Turtle. "Help yourself. There are plenty of them."

"Oh goody, goody!" cried Billy. "You are very generous."

Quickly Billy uncovered the hard-shelled little eggs, took as many of them as he could carry, and happily hopped down the path toward home.

Later in the day he dyed the eggs all beautiful rainbow colors. There were brilliant yellows, dark forest greens, pale lavenders, and rosy reds. On some were stripes and on one egg he even made a little bunny carrying an Easter egg.

When, at last, the eggs were all dyed, Billy gave a big sigh of relief and yawned sleepily. "I can't go to bed yet," he said to himself.

Then, from the highest shelf in the cupboard, Billy took down his special Easter basket. Carefully he placed all the precious eggs in the basket. He put the tough turtle eggs in the bottom and arranged the others on top. "There, I'm all ready to go," he thought as he gazed proudly at the basket of eggs.

Gently, he took the basket on his arm, opened his squeaky little door and hopped off through the dark forest to deliver his Easter eggs to the children of the outside world.

"I'm so glad I got the eggs finished so the children will have them on Easter morning," he thought, as he hopped along.

In telling stories young children often find conversation difficult. It is likely to consist mostly of question and answer or senseless bickering. This story, however, seems rather unusual in both quantity and quality of direct quotations, and there is evidence of steady improvement and growth in vocabulary and sentence structure as the story progresses. It will be noticed that, though the story grew out of a language period, science and nature-study facts were generously introduced.

Young children sometimes have difficulty in distinguishing between the real and the make-believe. The teacher may ask, "Did that really happen, or are you making it up?" Also, suggestible and unimaginative children may tend to copy the successful story pattern of others. Originality can be encouraged by suggesting to the children that they tell about things that really happened to them and by helping them pick out of their experience incidents worth telling about.

## CREATIVE WRITING

A feeling for and capability in creative expression, begun in oral storytelling, sooner or later comes to maturity in creative writing in the form of stories, poems, plays, and articles. In both written and oral creative endeavor the same purposes are served: intensive experiencing, close observation, originality and freedom of expression, and the enjoyment of ideas that are beautifully expressed. Creative writing, moreover, broadens the acquaintance with, and lays a foundation for, the enjoyment of literature, which is perhaps its primary goal; it increases sensitivity to and capacity for the enjoyment of beauty in people and things and adds somewhat to the ability to express oneself in clear, vigorous, descriptive, and entertaining language. Not many children will become artists, although it is worthwhile to discover the few who have unusual artistic capacity.

Creative verse is not to be confused with rhyme and jingle. Hatfield says: \*

However, in the particular field of poetry, the greatest single problem and danger lies in the easy and general confusion between traditional poetic forms and poetry itself. It is too easy for us to regard anything that rhymes as poetry and anything that scans reasonably well as a distinguished achievement. In so doing we miss the main point. Poetic experience is the thing to be sought, the exercise of the child's capacity to see the real world about him—things, people, events—freshly and intensely, to enter into the mind-built world of reading and imagining richly and vitally. The facility to put words into jingles will mean little to him. A developed capacity for poetic experience—for seeing, feeling, imagining—will enrich every day of his life.

On a morning following a night of terrific wind, the children were in a mood for expressing themselves. They worked quickly until the last line was reached. No one could think of a word to rhyme with "papers," so the teacher gave them the word "capers":

\* Hatfield, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

much attention should *not* be given to minor flaws. The emphasis should be placed on, "What did you like about Jim's story?"

The shy child deserves special consideration. He should not be forced. Perhaps the teacher can give him special help outside the class, so that his first efforts will be reasonably successful. Patience is required. Approval should be generous.

This first attempt at poetry by a very slow nine-year-old child was complimented, but members of the group tried to help by pointing out that although it was a good story, it might have been longer; for example, the mouse could have found some cheese or built a little nest:

Im a litle  
mouse. and when  
I nose around. I  
see a little house.

The following poem, while not a masterpiece, has rhythm, and the repetition of the word "splashes" gives a distinct feeling of a rainy day. The teacher might remark that the use of the word with its *sh* sound "really makes us hear the rain."

I like to walk  
In the rain,  
And hear it patter  
On the window pane.  
Its rhythm is like a song  
As it splashes, splashes  
All day long.

An informal atmosphere is favorable to creative effort. Such an atmosphere is effected largely by the attitude of the teacher and by the resulting attitude of the children. Seating is important too; if possible, the children should be seated in a compact, informal group on the floor or in chairs facing each other.

Occasional help may be given to the child who is halting for a word or phrases to express an idea exactly. Rewording a sentence to give force, clearness, or variety may be suggested. Correction of gross crudities must not detract from the effectiveness of the story.

As a variation of procedure in the primary grades, the class may work out a story together. Contributions are volunteered, evaluated, selected, and possibly written on the board. The written form requires close attention to organization. Another device is for the teacher to tell part of a story and allow the children to finish it.

the traditional robin red breast, is quite interesting. The children were highly satisfied with their product, which was made into a poster, appropriately decorated with a robin swinging on a branch, and given a place of prominence on the wall. It is very evident, however, that these children lacked poetic experience. They had probably heard very little poetry read and so lacked appreciation for *real* poetry. In this period of transition from jingle to poetry, they need to hear many fine poems read and read well—poems on every subject to help them realize that there is more to a poem than mere rhyme. The poem:

#### SPRING BRINGS A ROBIN

Little red breast robin  
 On a fence she's a-bobbin  
 She comes to us every spring.  
 When she makes her nest she likes to sing.  
 She lays her eggs in the nest  
 And that's what she takes care of best.  
 When the mean old jay comes by,  
 You ought to hear that bird cry.  
 When the bird flies out of its nest,  
 She goes down south to join the rest.

Halfway through first grade Freddie, whose background was rich in story lore, was writing chapter stories. In a 7- by 8½-inch paper-backed notebook, he wrote of his own accord the following series of stories. It will be noted that, though much longer than would ordinarily be expected from a first grader, his stories are about familiar incidents. A few of his shorter stories are of the imaginative type, and one longer story is about Abraham Lincoln whose lowly childhood seemed to have caught his interest. However, most of his stories, as well as the illustrations, are from his own experience. Since Freddie lives in a part of the country where deep snow affects all winter activities, it is no wonder that he carries the snow theme throughout. Notice his use of descriptive words and the interesting variety of sentence structure. Nothing has been changed except spelling and punctuation.

*This story is just a story.*

One winter day some snowmen came because it was good packing. There were ten or so. It was a snow day. And it was a school day. But it was stopping to snow. The name of the day was Friday, so wouldn't you think that it was a school day? It was in the afternoon. It was snowing good and hard. Cars could not start their G.E. motors because it was so very cold. So everybody had to wear ski pants.

## MISCHIEVOUS WIND

Last night the wind  
 Was whistling round.  
 It screeched and howled  
 All through the town.  
 It tore at the doors  
 And whirled the papers.  
 It blew the snow  
 And played great capers.

One beautiful autumn day a primary grade watched the brightly colored leaves fluttering from the maple trees and composed the following poem:

I am a little leaf,  
 A red and yellow leaf.  
 High up in a tree  
 I held tightly  
 While the wind tugged at me.  
 Then one windy day,  
 I could hold no longer.  
 Gently I floated  
 Down, down, down.  
 The other leaves  
 Made a place for me,  
 And we all went to sleep  
 Until spring.

The children liked their poem and gave it chorally again and again. Each time they involuntarily made some gestures to indicate the tugging wind or the floating leaf. They had really captured the feeling of the leaf in their story.

When something was needed for an American Education Week assembly program, the children suggested that they would like to give their poem. Then someone suggested that music be made for it, and all agreed. The program was finally presented in the following way:

FIRST CHILD: This fall we watched one of the maple trees in front of Clarkson change color. Then, one day when the leaves were falling, we pretended we were leaves and wrote a story. It doesn't rhyme, but we call it a poem.

(Children gave poem as choral speaking.)

SECOND CHILD: We liked our story so well that we decided to make it into a song, and so we made original music for it. (*The word original was mentioned by a little boy, thought very grown-up, and its use was insisted upon by the class.*) We will sing it for you.

In the following poem a fifth grade told the robin's story quite faithfully. It shows observation and their first sentence, "red breast robin" instead of

No one looked at it.  
 What a shame  
 To lose a shoe!

Children often identify themselves and their own emotions with the stories they write. Nancy was one of those quiet, pathetic children who, for no apparent reason, seems a social nonentity. The other children did not dislike her; they just overlooked her. When, during a story-writing period, she produced the following story, it seemed to indicate the depth of her hurt and her feeling of loneliness:

#### THE FROG

Once on the edge of a pool lived poor little me, the green frog. I was sad and lonely and no one would play with me.

One day I was playing and all of a sudden I heard something say, "Little frog, would you play with me?"

I looked up and saw a little boy. I said, "Yes, I will play with you. No one before would play with me. I will be glad to"

And so the boy and I played together after this and I had more friends.

**Specific Objectives.** While the primary outcomes of creative writing are enriching experience and enjoyment of literature, creative writing also makes distinct contributions to language development. Satisfying work requires, in the first place, a particular idea, thought, feeling, or mood worthy of expression. In the second place, the form of expression requires particular attention. Colorful words and phrases express thoughts and feelings clearly and beautifully; comparisons and figures of speech add vividness; balanced sentences, inverted constructions, direct discourse, repetitions, and rhyme are used to good effect. Organization and interesting details add clarity, completeness, and vividness. In mechanics, there is much use of quotation marks.

**Materials.** A vivid experience requiring expression is, in writing, even more important than in storytelling. To be avoided are the traditional, general, vague, abstract, literary themes on which the children have little to say and in which they have little interest. The primary sources of material are found in the lives of the children, in incidents and events that affect them personally, about which they have some knowledge, and in which they are interested.

From responses to an extensive children's questionnaire on what they had seen or experienced that made them feel most like writing a poem, the following list was compiled by Miss Ward: \*

\* Jess S. Hudson and others, *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, p. 357. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

*Chapter 2*

Ten snowmen were on the world. The snow was so deep too. But Christmas was coming, so they had a Christmas tree. Everybody had a Christmas tree. One of the family got an old funny man and ice skates and a pig dog and four games.

*Chapter 3*

"Ten presents for me," said Jack.

"Twelve presents for me," said Jane.

"Three presents for me," said Daddy.

"Four presents for me," said Mommy.

*Chapter 4*

It had been snowing very hard and some children were making a snowman—Jane and Jack and their friends. The snowman was named; Whitey-Pretty was his name. But Whitey-Pretty didn't like the snow. It is cold, you know, so he didn't like the snow. But the children liked him anyway.

*Chapter 5*

*Spring was coming Whitey-Pretty was melting.*

But birds were coming back, yes, and robins were coming.

After school Jack and Jane saw a robin that had a red breast.

It was their bird. His name was Reddy.

They had a long way to get home but they had a good time.

*The End*

According to Hatfield, "The teacher who looks only for poems about fairies, flowers, and sunsets will miss what are for the majority of children the best possibilities for poetic expression. Machines, sports, the sights and events of city streets, are legitimate parts of poetic experience. Whatever moves a child most deeply, means most to him, is his best material for poetic expression."<sup>1</sup>

When a third-grade child produced the following poem, its maturity caused the teacher to question its authorship, but the presence and condition of the particular shoe was soon verified by other members of the group who had seen it lying in an alley frequently used as a short cut. Other children seemed to have taken a poke or a kick at it, but on this one child, who did not often have new shoes, the sight had made a deep impression:

I saw an old shoe  
On the street.  
So old, worms were  
Crawling out of it.  
The sole was ripped,  
And the laces rotted.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

A sensitive eleven-year-old, entering this self-analytical period, wrote:

#### INSIDE MY HEART

Deep inside your heart  
Where your dreams are  
You think to yourself  
"I am in a great palace  
With all the riches I  
Could wish for."  
But suddenly your  
Dream fades away.  
And there you are  
In the same old place.

Notice the confusion about the future in the poem of this fourteen-year-old girl:

Maybe sometime,  
Maybe sometime,  
All my wishes will come true.  
Will I be a lady in a fine home?  
Will I be a working girl?  
Will I marry young?  
Will I marry old?  
Will I marry at all?  
Never! my wishes all include just one thing  
That is you.

Here another fourteen-year-old goes to nature for inspiration:

For the rocks and the hills,  
For the birds and the mills,  
We should be grateful.  
For autumn leaves bright,  
For the snow on wintry nights,  
We should be grateful.  
For the summer and the spring,  
When the birds and robins sing,  
We should be grateful.

A junior high school girl proposes one way of meeting difficulties:

#### DAYDREAMING

The most pleasant thing I can imagine is daydreaming my life away. It is one way to cope with problems that seem almost unbearable. You know that you will probably never see far off lands and meet important people, but you can always dream.



- |                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Falling snow                | 13. Watching rain                |
| 2. A Christmas tree            | 14. Birds singing in the morning |
| 3. Goldfish in the sun         | 15. Frost on the window          |
| 4. Moon thru my window         | 16. Seeing "Old Faithful"        |
| 5. Waves on Lake Michigan      | 17. Watching the circus          |
| 6. My mother                   | 18. St. Joseph River             |
| 7. Our baby                    | 19. Daddy teasing me             |
| 8. A waving flag               | 20. A tulip field in bloom       |
| 9. Things in a store window    | 21. My puppies at play           |
| 10. Thinking after I go to bed | 22. Pillow fights                |
| 11. The moon and stars         | 23. Sunrise                      |
| 12. Leaves in the sunshine     | 24. Spring                       |

A group of children, if given freedom to choose their own subjects for stories, will write about a surprising array of topics. Out of the twenty-six stories, prose and poetry, handed in by a primary group, the subjects ran as follows:

Kitten (3)	Bee (1)	Hen (1)
Squirrel (3)	Bird (1)	Little chicken (1)
Bear cub (2)	Boy (1)	Mermaid (1)
Little tree (2)	Codfish (1)	Old woman (1)
Mouse (2)	Fish (1)	Rabbit (1)
Snow fairy (2)	Fox and crow (1)	Winter (1)

Agnes De Lima, in her *The Little Red School House*, suggests opportunities for creative writing at a somewhat higher age level: \*

We help our children also to tap their personal lives for material to write about. The thirteen-year-old is interested in looking at himself. He is beginning to develop a measure of objectivity and he likes to compare himself with what he was two or three years ago. He is eager to analyze his personal problems, quite willing to write about them and thus see them in a new perspective. The whole question of personal relationships is pressing at his age. Parental influence is beginning to wane. The more mature children are trying very consciously to be self-directing. Friendship and dislike are both on a more subtle plane but of increasing importance. Cliques develop among girls, and the stigma of being excluded is keenly felt. Interest in the opposite sex is growing, but there are still many in the group not yet mature enough for much of "that sort of thing." New problems about the whole problem of social relations are developing, and a growing self-consciousness about the whole matter. It takes little prodding by the teacher for children at this age to write freely and often most revealingly of their problems and desires.

\* M. R. Trabue and others, *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, p. 122.

appropriate words and phrases, and literary devices; but such models should not be copied or followed slavishly.

Class consideration of productions provides the opportunity to give genuine approval, when approval is due; to unveil falsity, cant, and plagiarism; and to suggest improvements in thought and form. All the children profit by this critical discussion. Individual differences should be recognized here and approval given to the less able child who comes forth with a sincere, if mediocre, product, as well as to the few talented children. This is the first attempt at written expression by a slow fourth-grade child and, as such, should receive commendation:

Tom had a toothache once day he wants too go out and play but he couldnt.

**Problems.** Perhaps the greatest problem is to get the nonliterary type of child to make an effort to express himself. To a natural lack of interest in written expression may be added, in such a case, a resistance to any requirement of mental effort. The problem is not solved by urging the child to express himself, but by helping him find something to say and an adequate motive for saying it. In discussing this problem, Hatfield says: <sup>11</sup>

The problem of self-expression is as much a problem of self as of expression. There must be a self to express, and the problem of creative teaching is a problem of developing that self by a direct stimulation of the senses, of the imagination, and of judgment. To turn students back on their own undeveloped powers, assuming that they already are what they are trying to become, is to beg the whole teaching question. Freedom of any kind is appreciated only by the person of abundant resources, by the person who has already learned to start himself observing, imagining or reflecting.

One of the simple facts of psychology is that the trained eye or ear notices what it is prepared to notice. . . . It is part of the teacher's function to supply the senses of his pupils with such definite clues. There is some danger, of course, that the teacher in such stimulation will give too much of himself. But there is the greater danger that he will give too little—too little to lure the senses of his students to follow. Almost everyone can trace much of his sensory interest back to the person or poem or situation which first aroused it.

A popular notion among students is that their own experience is unworthy of imaginative interpretation. Herein lies the challenge to the teacher of creative expression.

Then follows a series of specific suggestions for teaching, with the caution that the particular teaching device be treated as a point of departure, not as an inflexible assignment. Cautions to be observed include such points as the following: <sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 115-116.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.

A fourth grader describes a familiar experience thus:

I like to watch the fire  
In the big fireplace.  
I never seem to tire  
Looking for a face.  
I like to see the flames  
Jump up and down and creep,  
As if they're playing games—  
Games of hide and seek.

Next in importance to personal experience as a source of inspiration for creative writing is the study of literature, especially poetry. Reading and listening to well-read stories and poems often provide the spark that sets fire to the imagination and the urge to create. Literature provides a mirror in which the child can see and interpret his own experience, suggesting phases of his own experience, real and imagined, that are adaptable to creative expression. Moreover, literature provides ways of treating topics and patterns of words which the child can adapt to his own ends.<sup>10</sup>

**Processes.** The same general instructional procedure used in storytelling is appropriate for creative writing. In the first place, an occasion that provides an immediate purpose for writing is helpful. The occasion may arise naturally in the course of related work in some other phase of the school program; or it may be created by the teacher, who can often take advantage of fortuitous circumstances. For example, on a particularly foggy morning a sixth-grade teacher asked the children whether they had noticed on the way to school how objects, such as trees, houses, and approaching cars, looked in the fog. During the discussion she showed pictures, read stories and poems, and recalled experiences of persons who became lost in a fog. As an outgrowth of this preliminary work, each child drew a picture of some fogbound scene or incident and then wrote a few words or lines that vividly described the scene or incident. An inconspicuous beginning in poetic expression was thus made. Later the children reviewed and extended their descriptions; some of them used verse form.

The point is that children cannot create something out of nothing. If the children do not have a background of ideas, thoughts, and feelings, the teacher must help create such a background. The teacher does not say, "Now close your eyes and think," but, "Open your eyes and see."

The use of models—usually of literary merit, but sometimes the work of other children—is necessary to suggest ways of dealing with the topic,

<sup>10</sup> May Hill Arbuthnot, *Children and Books*, Scott, Foresman and Company, Chicago, 1957, part 2.

ical phases, including spelling, capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing, and neatness. Work worthy of publication should be corrected by the pupil to the utmost extent possible and then checked and finally corrected by the teacher.

Sometimes, before the children start writing their first completely independent stories, the teacher may explain to them that spelling "won't count today." She may instruct them to write their stories as fast as they can think of them and if there are words they cannot spell, to put down just enough of the word so that they will know what it means. She may say, "Later I'll help you correct your misspelled words." In correcting these papers the teacher will find many stories which she cannot read at all but which the writer will have to translate for her. Then the story may be written correctly by the teacher and recopied by the child. This method takes time, but it gives the teacher an insight into individual difficulties, and the child is very proud of his corrected and recopied story. As an added incentive the teacher may type a few of the best stories for the class storybook.<sup>12</sup>

The following story, written by a third-grade child, does not mean much in the original, but after it was correctly rewritten by the teacher, the child was pleased and proud of his creative efforts

Mother, said Bobby May I go to apoupar to night at the sevicksenker. the little boy next Door siad thot IT was abuort fairys. yes you my. that night Bobby touk jum. the garting rose and the play begain. there was a man and he was to telly the story. once opan a time he bagain in a dark agoom forest there lived 24 little dawrfs and fairts. one day one of the dafrws said to another darwfe wood you like to take a walk in the forest today. just as they reht the forest they hared a qyer sound It was not very far off. They both soated towards the woods and what should they see bat a geart big gante sanding befor him. he killed thim and went spun his way. The gerttine went down and the peole sarted home. that night Bobby dream of the play.

the end

In the following story a fifth-grade girl shows the influence of TV and the space age.

#### SUPER GIRL

When I was little I used to watch Super Man all the time. When it was over I used to tie a towel around my neck and pretend like I was Super Man.

One day a boy who was about my own age and I were trying to fly. He said that he jumped off his porch and flew over to the neighbor's house. It was impossible but I believed him. He told me to jump from a branch about seven feet up in a tree. So I did. That was the last time I ever played Super Girl.

<sup>12</sup> Lois V. Johnson and Mary Bany, "Compositions, Not Commas," *Elementary English*, December, 1954, 31:466-468.

1. Teachers themselves must see in each unit a wealth of possibility before they suggest such an assignment. . . .
2. The atmosphere of the classroom will in large measure determine the success of the units.
3. The materials used in the classroom to stimulate response should be vividly and compellingly pertinent to pupils' own experience.
4. The pupils should be familiar with simple patterns which they can adopt and adapt for their own purposes.
5. The pupils should be trained to catch an inspiration when it comes and to work it out then so far as time and present insight permit, and to revise carefully.
6. Publication and public praise are advisable only when they are necessary to destroy an inhibiting group attitude.

An older child occasionally finds the writing of limericks a good beginning and becomes quite clever at this form of expression. A good limerick usually denotes a keen and rather mature sense of humor and is certainly deserving of commendation. However, the child and class must realize that it *is* a limerick and not necessarily a true poem. An eighth grade enjoyed the nonsense rhymes contributed by Joyce, such as the following:

There was a young fellow named Jones,  
Who rattled and rattled his bones.  
And when he would snore,  
He would rattle some more,  
And now he is covered with stones.

A second problem arises from the limits placed on creative expression by the mechanics of writing. The teacher must either limit written work to the child's range of mechanical ability or allow the child freedom of expression with the consequence of having to deal tolerantly with a number of mechanical imperfections. The policy of encouraging free expression is favored by the authors. The teacher then must correct the child's written work for him, insist that he correct it, or use a combination of both methods. Unquestionably the child should assume responsibility for the mechanics in which he has been trained; to do otherwise would encourage careless and slovenly work. However, since the child's ability to think and his power of oral expression far exceed his ability to use the proper mechanics of writing, the teacher should take over when the child's expressional needs exceed the limits of his responsibility or knowledge in matters of mechanics. The relative share of responsibility between child and teacher will vary with the grade level. In the lower grades, compositions, individual or class, are dictated to the teacher. Later the child begins individual work, and then he is gradually introduced to and assumes responsibility for mechan-

a dual purpose: vivifying an important occasion or event and training in a particular kind of language experience.

Writing plays provides opportunities for developing a great many different language abilities. Particularly important are such abilities as choosing significant topics worthy of, and adapted to, dramatic presentation; emphasizing important phases of a topic to accomplish a particular purpose, such as showing that Virginia territorially was the mother of many states; using vivid, terse dialogue; building up to a dramatic climax; and using the form and written mechanics of play writing.

The procedure in handling a play-writing experience follows the general steps of all creative experiences. The occasion should be a real one, impelling in its immediate purpose. The class should thoroughly understand the purpose of the play and should select some over-all idea, feeling, or mood to be expressed. The planning stage is handled according to the pupils' experience in dramatization and play writing and according to the maturity of the children. In the lower grades, the play, if used, is dictated to the teacher. Presumably, however, most play writing will be done in the intermediate and upper grades. The teacher may use a whole-class or group procedure, or a combination. The preliminary purposing and planning are likely to be done by the whole class; the detailed writing of the script, by group work. In beginning play writing, it is necessary to acquaint the children with the dramatic form. This is done by studying plays, either commercial or textbook.

Usually the writing of the script is done by selected committees working on the several scenes. Proposed scenes must meet the approval of the committees, of course, and must be presented to and passed on by the whole class.

This form of writing is fun for many children and is valuable both for developing an understanding of important phases of curricular work and for cultivating important language abilities. The values of play writing may be enhanced by the study of dramatic literature, good movies, and TV and radio programs.

This radio skit was written by an eighth-grade girl working independently, and shows the strong influence of the popular commercial programs:

*Characters:* Jean Mannon, Eva Mannon, Announcer

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and Gentlemen. Are you nervous and upset? Do you jump at the least little noise? If so try "Nerves" for the nerves. One drop and you'll never try another. Now, dear people, "Nerves" brings you part one of "The Jewel Mystery."

(Slight pause)

In the following composition an eighth-grade girl shows real promise in creative poetic expression. Confused by her emotions and the very profusion of her pictures, she needs guidance and constructive suggestions; but one feels that with sympathetic criticism she may develop into a good writer.

#### MAGIC FINGERS

The springtime was beautiful, clear, and mild,  
 Flower's in bloom and the trees were wild  
 And wet with dew—the sun had not yet ris'n.  
 While the little blades of green grass  
 Whispered and rustled of days gone past.  
 There was magic in the air.  
 The bushes and trees seemed to echo it,  
 As the sun rose, bit by bit,  
 Shedding its glory and all its might,  
 Dispersing the shadows and fears of night.  
 And, as the first rays of the sun were a signal,  
 The birds began their morning concert, setting the rays to dancing.  
 Brushing past trees, whirling and prancing.  
 Little fluffy white clouds played tag with the giant orb of light,  
 As if to contest their strength and might.  
 The magic was at its greatest peak,  
 But tho it waned, and acquired a meek  
 And docile attitude,  
 'Twould never leave our latitude  
 Of fair and calm feelings.  
 And now, tho 'tis winter, the trees are shrouded in white blankets,  
 And the brook tinkles merrily  
 While ice attempts to muffle its joy in its cold heart.  
 The magic ever lingers,  
 Pauses and bursts with all its glee again,  
 As spring nears.

**Writing Plays.** Writing plays is a special form of creative writing in which the children find opportunity to use the language abilities peculiar to all creative work and the specialized techniques developed in dramatic experiences. Writing plays thus combines two types of training in language and provides for further development of each.

The play may be a product of the imagination, dealing with topics and problems of a fanciful nature—an esthetic experience indulged in for its own sake. In school, however, dramatic writing is usually the outgrowth of some phase of curricular work in which there is a serious purpose of presenting important information, such as an event in history—the raising of the Bear Flag in California in 1846. The writing of the play here serves

articles a means of presenting their views on personal, school, and community matters. From writing articles the children gain a sense of responsibility for community behavior; crystallize their thinking on important issues; obtain training in the use of an expository form of writing; and prepare for reading the informational parts of newspapers and magazines.

In handling the writing of articles, the teacher should emphasize choosing a worthy issue, sincerely expressing one's own views, writing clearly and forcefully, avoiding offending others by impoliteness, and avoiding dogmatism and narrow prejudices.

The following article was written by an eighth-grade boy for an imaginary newspaper, *World Press*, during the French Revolution. It shows unusual maturity in both ideas and form.

#### EDITORIAL

In the past few years the world has stood aghast observing the horrors of the French Revolution. Let us all hope that mankind will never again have to endure an eternal struggle such as this has been. The people of France are not completely to blame for this mayhem and murder for they had a legitimate complaint against the tyranny imposed upon them by the aristocrats of France. An inevitable revolution took place but has slowly been turned from its main idea into a thrust for power and the wanton slaughtering of all who oppose whatever mob that makes that thrust. Any sensible leader who arises in France is either shouted down or murdered. Thousands of Frenchmen and women have met their death on the guillotine. At this point the people have drawn blood and like it. A mania has developed, "kill or be killed," the motto. Let us hope that France will awaken to the peril in which she is slowly pushing herself and develop a firm basis of leadership to build herself into the nation she was meant to be.

#### EXERCISES

1. Make a check list of key storytelling abilities.
2. List typical opportunities for creative work at one grade level.
3. Plan a storytelling lesson or series of lessons.
4. Collect samples of creative writing from the pupils in one class. Compare in respect to important qualities.
5. Plan and carry through a lesson in creative writing. Report results.
6. Do a bit of creative writing—story, verse, or article. Report to class.

#### REFERENCES

- Applegate, Mauree: *Helping Children Write*. Row, Peterson & Company, Evanston, Ill., 1954, chaps. 2-5.



ANNOUNCER: It was a cold winters night and the house was creepy as ever at the old Mannon home. Jean and Eva Mannon were in their room while their Aunt Jessie was downstairs going over some important papers.

JEAN. Eva, how come you didn't do your homework?

EVA: Oh, I have a terrible headache. I feel as if something dreadful is going to happen.

JEAN: That's silly. What could possibly happen?

(*Sound effect—a shrill, sharp scream*)

JEAN: What was that?

EVA. I knew it! I knew it! I just knew something would happen.

JEAN: Don't be silly. That was just a stray cat or something? It must have been

ANNOUNCER: Slowly the girls got up and went downstairs. As they reached the bottom, Eva called.

EVA: Aunt Jessie! Aunt Jessie! Are you there?

JEAN. Aunt Jessie!

ANNOUNCER: Just then they flung open the doors to the study and there, on the floor, was lying Aunt Jessie with a crumpled note in her hand. The note read: "I gave you your chance. I want those jewels." Signed X.

EVA: Is she dead? Has she fainted?

JEAN (*crying*): She's dead—she's dead. Murdered!

EVA: No! No! Who could have done such a thing?

ANNOUNCER: Jean walks slowly to the phone picks up the receiver and calls the police.

JEAN: I want to report a murder. At 551 Park Avenue. Please, please hurry.

ANNOUNCER: Jean fainted. Eva was crying and screaming. Ladies and gentlemen, who murdered Aunt Jessie? Will the police get there in time to prevent another murder—perhaps the murder of Jean or Eva? Folks, you can't afford to miss the next part of "The Jewel Mystery." Remember, folks, "Nerves" for the nervous!

**Articles.** The writing of articles is ordinarily a part of the larger project of publishing a newspaper or magazine, although articles may be prepared separately for local papers. Only a small number of the items in a school paper can strictly be called articles; for the most part they are news reports, poems, stories, and the like. The actual article presumes an idea or issue in which the writer is vitally interested, from the point of view of either bringing conviction to others or airing a grievance. The article has the creative qualities of expressing an individual point of view and of developing it in language that is clear, forceful, and convincing to the reader. There is more exposition and argumentation in articles than in other kinds of creative writing.

Many issues arise in connection with the school life of the child in which he is vitally interested and on which he has something to say. Such issues include playgrounds, report cards, safety, hobbies, and various curricular activities. If permitted freedom of expression, children will find in writing

## Giving Information

In this chapter we take up a miscellaneous group of experiences which have the common purpose of giving information but which vary considerably in importance in school and outside life. The group consists of talks and reports, explanations and directions, announcements and advertisements, introductions, interviews, minutes, filling in forms, and tests. As in the preceding chapters, the most important experiences are taken up first, and basic principles and procedures characteristic of the group are developed in some detail; then the remaining experiences are treated in terms of significant differences.

**Talks and Reports.** The key purpose in talks and reports is to give information; a secondary purpose is to persuade. The information-giving talk is to be distinguished from storytelling, in which the emphasis is on entertainment and in which the specific purposes, materials, and language techniques are appropriate to the entertainment function.

Informational talks and reports, oral and written, have an important place in the modern school program in which children gather material from a variety of sources and pool it for class consideration in the solution of problems. Occasions for talks and reports in adult life are usually less frequent, but they are equally important. As language experiences, talks and reports provide useful training in clear thinking, sound reasoning, logical organization, accurate reporting, and the drawing of valid conclusions.

Some key points in the information-giving experience of reporting may be found in one child's third-grade report. The child brought to school a small glass jar containing a dried leaf and a white cabbage butterfly. She

- Broening, Angela M., and others: *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, pp. 140-192.
- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, chaps 2, 10, pp. 110-116, 129-138.
- Burrows, Alvina T., and others: *They All Want to Write*, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., Indianapolis, 1952, chap. 2.
- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, pp. 260-268.
- and Frieda H. Dingee: *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 28, 42-44.
- and Marian Zollinger: *Guiding Language Learning*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chap. 18.
- Developing Children's Power of Self-expression through Writing*, Board of Education, City of New York, 1952.
- Fraim, Emma C.: "Exploring the Minds of Children," *Elementary English*, April, 1955, 32:232-234.
- Girdon, Mary B.: "I Like to Write," *Elementary English*, November, 1954, 31:399-401.
- Hall, R. D.: "Motivation for Creative Writing," *Elementary English*, March, 1955, 32:154-156.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, chaps. 9-11, pp. 113-114.
- Herrick, Virgil E., and Leland B. Jacobs: *Children and the Language Arts*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955, chap. 10.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp. 263-264, 273-275, 339, 346-369, 372.
- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, pp. 121-136, 208-237.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 211-213, 218-219, 234-236, 242-245, 274-282.
- Shane, Harold G.: *Research Helps in Teaching the Language Arts*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Washington, 1955, pp. 44-47.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: "Creative Activities in the Language Arts in the Elementary School," *Elementary English*, March, 1955, 32:147-149.
- : *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, pp. 290-305, 331-340.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 82-83, 119-122, 139-143, 217-218.

than moths, and they each have a pair of feelers and smellers. Then the book told about the knobs on the ends of the butterflies feelers, but we knew that.

A fourth child, not on the committee, had found a sentence which he read: "No moth or butterfly eats, but some drink nectar from flowers."

*Specific Objectives.* In mature reporting in the later grades, the primary phase of a report is a clear, definite statement of a problem. The initial statement delimits the scope of the talk or report and outlines subdivisions of the problem. The selection of pertinent, valid, authoritative material is another phase of reporting. Materials should be factual, illustrative, and concrete; diagrams and objects are often helpful. In the presentation of the report, the main requirement is clarity, which is obtained by precise and concise language and by an organization or sequence that distinguishes points clearly and shows their relations to the main problem. Outlining is helpful in such an organization. A summary of essential information (conclusions, inferences or implications, and recommendations) frequently comes at the end of the talk or report and provides a comprehensive answer or solution to the main problem. In informational talks and reports pupils should clearly distinguish between authority and personal opinion, and should avoid alienating the group by offensive language or dogmatism. There is often room for honest differences of opinion on important issues; a speaker may hope to convince his audience, but he cannot rightly demand agreement.

In talks and spoken reports, the basic oral language abilities naturally operate, particularly those that contribute to clarity and force: clear, deliberate speaking; looking directly at the audience; emphasizing important points by inflection and pauses; and an easy, natural manner. In written reports all the general objectives and most of the mechanics of writing are to be observed; particularly to be emphasized is the use of the topic sentence, of quotation marks, of bibliographies, and of the outline.

In the first grade, information-giving activities are handled largely by use of the informal conversation and discussion techniques. Sometimes the children like to report what they did the night before. In the first-grade news period reported below, one child sat in the front of the room. Acting as chairman, he called upon anyone who indicated that he wished to report. All reports were given from the front of the room, and the class handled itself.

FIRST CHILD: My daddy gave me some money and I didn't want to spend it, so I hid it and then I put it in the big bank. I've got \$50 now.

SECOND CHILD: Susan and I, before we came to school, Susan and I were play-

# AWAY WE GO

Setch Is

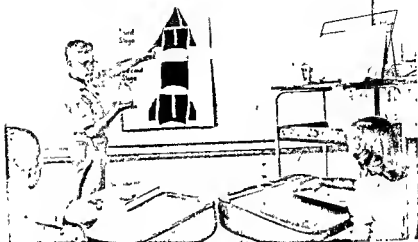


Fig. 7-1. A third grader reports on a large topic. (Courtesy of Len Bathurst)

reported to the class: "Last fall I found a caterpillar. I put it in this jar, and Mommy put it in the cupboard. We forgot all about it until last night, when we looked at it and found this butterfly." The children looked at the butterfly and immediately asked questions: What is the difference between a butterfly and a moth? Is this a butterfly or a moth? Does it lay eggs? Does it eat? Three children were delegated to go to the library to find answers to the questions. In the afternoon they reported:

**FIRST CHILD:** We went to the library, and I found this book that tells all about butterflies and moths. These paper markers are where there are pictures I want to show you. (Opens book and displays pictures.) These pictures at the top show the different parts of a butterfly and tell what they're called—see, these are the feelers. This picture over here is a moth. This is a tiger swallowtail. That's the male and here's the female. I think this is a Polyphmus. Isn't it beautiful? This is like Leona's butterfly. It just says, "common white."

**SECOND CHILD:** The book that I looked at says that moth eggs are very small, but we knew that. It said some butterflies and some moths dig holes in the ground for protection until their hard shell forms. When a moth starts to fly around it's all grown up. It just took ours a day and a half to grow up.

**THIRD CHILD:** I found that butterflies fly by day and most moths fly at night. Butterflies and moths all have six legs and four wings. Butterflies live longer

included and that the organization covers the three topics of the history of the telephone, its importance, and its correct use, treated in separate paragraphs. Mechanics are good, but not perfect.

#### TELEPHONES

The telephone was invented by Alexander Graham Bell. It was invented June 2, 1825. Mr. Bell was experimenting with the phone when he spilled a liquid on his suit. He called to his assistant Thomas A. Watson, "Mr. Watson, please come here." Watson heard the voice through the telephone clearly for the first time.

Telephones are important. If it weren't for the telephones many might have died with illness or accident. Telephones are used for emergencies, as calling a doctor, ambulance or fire department. They are used for information calls, friendly calls and many others.

Telephones should be used correctly. First we should know the number we're dialing. When the receiver is picked up, listen for the dial tone. Place your finger in the dial, pull it to finger stop and let it go. When talking speak clearly and not too long. Never slam the receiver down.

Sometimes more detailed lists of objectives are set up for talks and reports.<sup>2</sup> In the authors' judgment it is better to concentrate on a few key objectives than to scatter attention over many. It must be recognized, however, that classes vary in ability and that within any class there are individual pupils who are ready for work on higher levels.

*Occasions.* The occasions for giving talks and reports in school appear in those situations where problems and issues arise and where information is available for individual, supplementary handling. The informational type of subject—social studies, nature study, or health—is an especially fertile source for reports of excursions, observations, interviews, reference reading, and experiments. Such subjects as art, music, and literature supply opportunities for talks or reports on particular artists, programs, and selections. Book reports are valuable as a means of extending acquaintance with and interest in a variety of literary works. The business of schoolkeeping, school-life activities such as clubs, committees, and pupil councils, provide many occasions for talks and reports. Other occasions are supplied by magazine articles, radio programs, community problems and projects, hobbies, and home-life activities.

The following book reports are here given exactly as written by fifth-grade children, all members of the same group:

My favorite book is an Pueblo Indian story the name is *The Missing Kachina* the story is by Grace Moon. There are several others by her too, but I liked

<sup>2</sup> See W. W. Hatfield, *An Experience Curriculum In English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, pp. 155-156, 204-205.

ing with kites. Then we decided to do something else, so we went around in back and I found this (*shows old radio tube*). I told Susan it might explode.

THIRD CHILD: Last night I went to a concert with Mother and Daddy.

FOURTH CHILD: I went to a concert too. I had a popcorn ball and I shot a BB gun and hit a thing and won a prize. It was a squirt gun.

In the second grade, especially in the latter half, the children are mature enough to begin to give individual and simple committee reports. For example, a child may have noticed the arrival of a new bird in the spring and wishes to describe it in sufficient detail to make it recognizable to others; or a pupil may have observed the construction of a new house and wishes to report some of the things the builders were doing; or a boy whose father is a fireman may want to tell about how a fireman dresses and what he does at a fire. The organization in these little talks or reports is based on a simple incident sequence or time sequence.

Much use of reports is made in nature study. In reporting on a bird seen in the early spring, the child should recognize the need for including pertinent facts, such as color, size, song or call, where seen, actions, and nest-building habits. In developing the children's powers of observation and training them in the ability to put essential facts into words, the teacher may begin by bringing specimens or pets into the classroom. The children have a common basis of experience and can compare statements. It may be necessary to direct observation by stimulating questions, such as, What is the color of the bird? What is it doing? How big is it? What is its shape? What kind of song does it have?<sup>1</sup>

A child gave the following report on her trip to Florida:<sup>2</sup>

On the train I slept in an upper berth. I watched the porter make it up.

First he pulled down a shelf that was set up against the ceiling of the coach. It had pillows and blankets on it. He used some of these to make Mother's bed in the lower berth. The others he used to make my bed.

When the bed was ready, the porter brought a little ladder and I climbed up. It was fun to sleep so high up, with mother sleeping under my berth.

Reporting, individual and committee, continues to be a common form of language experience throughout the grades; and standards in terms of content, organization, sentence structure, vocabulary, etc., naturally rise from grade to grade. Increasing maturity of expression may be observed in the study of typical reports at the several grade levels. Following is a report at the sixth-grade level. It may be observed that interesting content is

<sup>1</sup> See Mildred A. Dawson, *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, pp. 49-50.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

The *Heidi* report, though not long, is complete and seems almost literary in style. The writer has conveyed in these few lines the impression that she enjoyed the story very much and that she is a bookish little girl. On the other hand, the reporter of *Smoky* is obviously not a great reader and finds written expression almost too much for him. Though he apparently enjoyed the excitement of *Smoky*, he probably needs additional reading experience before attempting further reporting. And finally, *The Secret Garden* report shows quite mature sentence structure and vocabulary. Paragraphing, punctuation, and spelling are also unusually good; one feels that this child has a wide reading background and is quite capable of making the analysis necessary for a good book report.

A girl in another fifth grade wrote the following report, showing maturity in content and form:

#### BOOK REPORT—CARYL

1. Title—The True Book of African Animals
2. Author—John Wallace Purcell
3. Non Fiction
4. I liked the tick-birds best. They were a friend of the buffalo. These birds eat ticks. They also warn him of danger. In turn the tick-birds get a free meal and ride.
5. I liked the part when the mother hippo took her baby out to an island in the river. A crocodile almost got it. But his mother saved it in time.

*Processes.* A first step in reporting is to select a worthy occasion. The occasion often arises in connection with a problem or issue under general consideration by the class or in connection with a special committee assignment. The individual who is to report must first select and define an appropriate topic and then set the limits of his treatment. The topic should be one about which the reporter is interested and has some basic information. It may be a personal experience that he has had or a subject that requires gathering information by interview or research. Often topics chosen are too general and vague for good reporting; the child may not realize that it cannot be treated in a short period. Instead of "Safety" as a topic, the child should choose "Safety in Crossing Streets" or "Safety in Using Bicycles near the School." A study of the use of arithmetic in a business office is a better project than a general survey of business practices. The study of weather may be made specific by listing and explaining the *variabilities of the weather in a particular area*.

Some practice may be given in defining and limiting the scope of topics by having the class consider specific examples. The pupils may take general topics and list specific topics appropriate to each. In her article de-



the Missing Kachina best. I like her stories because they are all exciting. There are parts in all her stories where the ones she writes about find gold or something. You may be able to find her stories most any library. I am sure you would her stories.

I liked the book of Connie Carl the best because there are a lot of exciting parts in it. Connie wins \$500.00 at the rodeo and do you think something might happen to it well if you do read the book and see for yourself. Well if Connie doesn't pay up the bank what she borrowed she will lose her ranch. I'm not going to tell you any more. read the book and find out if she does.

My favorite book is "Donald Duck and his Friends." the chapter I like best is the Fire engine and the hotel caught on Fire. if you read this story you would like it.

A book that I read and liked a lot is Heidi. It was written by,—J. Spyri. And the main characters are, Heidi, the Uncle, Peter, and his Grandmother. The part I liked a lot was where Peter rolled the wheel chair down the mountain and if you want to know what happened to him and many other exciting things read the book.

This book is a good book and its name is Smoky. I like the part where he and another horse got in a fight, and the other horse got killed. I didn't finish it, boy I bet he didn't get kilt.

I read The Secret Garden by Frances H. Burnett. I think it was interesting because it started out with an ugly little girl called Mary.

But one day the guards were dying and knowbody ate their dinner so Mary feeling very disagreeable drank some wine and went to sleep.

Later in the story she goes to live with her uncle in a big house in London.

Lots of other things happened to her but If you want to know what happened read the book.

It may be noted that, while the children seem to like their books because of some element of mystery or excitement, there is nevertheless a wide range in maturity of expression and in reading ability, as evidenced by the choice of books read and reported on. One child is acquainted not only with the author of her book, *The Missing Kachina*, but with other stories by the same author, and she has even discovered familiar characteristics of this author. The child is struggling for expression and needs considerable help in the mechanics of writing, but in spite of these difficulties she has written quiet an acceptable report.

The little girl who reported on *Connie Carl* is not concerned with authorship, but she makes you thrill with her at the rodeo and share her anxiety over the possible loss of the ranch. The reader of *Donald Duck* enjoyed the story and the report, which, while immature, is after all a beginning.

definition of what constitutes a talk or report and in a list of specific standards.

As a third step in developing the talk-reporting technique, the teacher may summarize or outline an appropriate procedure for making a report, such as: (1) Choose a suitable topic; (2) limit the scope of the topic to a single incident or phase; (3) outline the main points; (4) add vividness and interest by using illustrative material, examples, details, apt words and phrases, figures of speech, comparisons, and variety in sentences; (5) plan a good beginning and ending; (6) select an appropriate title; and (7) give some attention to delivery.

The last step logically is for the children to collect material and plan their reports. Material may be gathered in a number of ways, varying with the topic. In reporting on a personal experience, it is necessary to recall exactly what happened and how one felt about it and to select the parts that are significant and interesting. If the report is on a topic in the social studies, it is necessary to select, evaluate, and put together verbal material. Other reports require interviewing and observing.

Planning the report requires keeping the main topic or problem in mind and organizing the material into significant subtopics or heads. Making an outline, as the gathering of material progresses, will be helpful. This requires judgment in the selection of crucial subtopics and in the placement of related material under the same topics.

For example, in a social studies unit on the Pueblo Indians, third-grade level, the following main problems were established:

1. Who were the Pueblo Indians and where did they live?
2. What kinds of homes did they originally have?
3. What kinds of food did they eat?
4. What kinds of clothing did they wear?
5. What was their family and community life like?
6. What kinds of travel, trade, and communication did they use?
7. What have the Pueblo Indians given to America, and how do they live today?

These problems, naturally, were set up by the teacher and class working together; it would be a mature group of pupils indeed who could compose such a list independently. The problems provided a working outline, a basis for gathering and organizing material. The entire class may take up the problems singly or may be divided into groups, each group working on a separate problem. In either case, a detailed list of subtopics is worked out for each main problem. In the Pueblo Indian unit, under (1), the following subtopics were listed:

scribing the talk-reporting procedure, Ethel H. Ludin discusses the handling of this phase of the work: <sup>4</sup>

To give practice in choosing a subject of suitable scope, a list of alternative topics such as the following was given and the better of the two in each case was chosen by the class with a brief reason for the choice.

1. Admiral Byrd at the South Pole—Fresh Vegetables at the South Pole.
2. My Vacation—My First Fish.
3. Sugar Beets in Colorado—Beet Field Workers.

A second exercise to develop the same skill involved a list of broad subjects which were to be made more suitable by narrowing them. Some of these were "Lincoln's Life," "Pets," and "Pioneer Days." The children came to understand how overwhelming the subject "Abraham Lincoln" could be, especially in the light of Carl Sandburg's biography, and how satisfying it would be to have such a topic as "Lincoln's Humor" or "Lincoln at School."

Together we then evaluated subjects suggested by members of the class, improving them when it was desirable. As each child chose a point which he was interested in discussing, we passed judgment on whether it was within his ability to treat it adequately in a short talk. With the help of his group every child had soon chosen a topic for our initial adventure.

The next step in developing the talk-reporting technique is to give the children some idea of what constitutes a good talk or report. Two procedures have been used by teachers with good results: the experience or the discovery method, or presenting to the class examples of reporting, good and bad, and allowing the children to decide which is better. In the first procedure, the children are allowed to begin giving talks and reports without much preliminary guidance. The children soon discover by listening to each other that some reports are good and others are not good. Attention is then given to the good reports, and analyses are made to reveal what makes them good, to discover the qualities of a good report.

The second procedure begins directly with the study of models. The textbook often provides illustrative reports, and original examples of written reports may be presented by the teacher. Reports of both children and adults are usable, but children's reports are more realistic and suggestive. This second procedure comes more directly to the point of setting up standards, but it fails to provide the desirable orientation to the issues involved that is provided by the procedure which begins with the children's own work. Both methods have the same purpose, and both culminate in a clear

<sup>4</sup>Jess S. Hudson and others, *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp 296-297.

uted to the World." Some information had been gathered on various topics, and previous reports had shown need for improvement.

### *Objectives*

1. To improve ability to select the most significant ideas to present to the class, narrowing the subject
2. To improve ability to organize ideas
3. To improve ability to present well-selected and well-prepared material in an interesting manner

### *Procedure*

1. Need for the improvement in reports was discussed.
2. The teacher read a sample report to the class:

I never knew until I studied the story of Greece that our form of government began in that country. The Greeks started the idea of allowing all people to help rule themselves. This kind of government is called a democracy. People in Greece were allowed to vote, to choose their officers, to have trials, and to help make laws. I think this was the greatest contribution Greece made.

3. The sample report was discussed as follows:
  - a. The beginning sentence.
  - b. The narrowness and organization of the material.
  - c. The information given.
4. As an outgrowth of the discussion, standards for the reports were established.
5. The children gave good beginning sentences for their respective topics for practice.
6. The pupils planned brief, pointed oral reports, using about ten minutes.
7. Following the planning period, the class discussed the necessity of the audience situation and established standards for listening.
8. Plans were made for taking notes on essential points.
9. Reports were given, organized around the major points of the problem:
  - a. Government.
  - b. Art.
  - c. Literature.
  - d. Architecture.
  - e. Education.
10. Each child evaluated each report, using a check sheet on which were recorded the standards set up in (3) above.

*Problems.* Dealing adequately with information requires a thorough understanding of subject matter and the ability to think logically. Problems arise in connection with both requirements; a child's knowledge of the subject may be vague or confused, and he may lack the ability to make a logical breakdown of the subject into key points and to combine related materials. One problem that arises very early and persists steadily involves

- a. Where they came from
- b. Where they settled, cliff dwellers
- c. Where they next moved and why
- d. The new country and its climate
- e. The geographical features of the country; tree and plant life
- f. Neighboring tribes and enemies

An outline such as this is a useful guide to purposeful study. The main problems provide a logical breakdown of the topic of Pueblo Indian life, each main problem sets up a distinct area of study, and the detailed topics under each main problem point clearly to the information desired.

The extent to which children can participate in preparing such a study outline depends on the abilities of the children and more particularly on the training the children have received in doing this kind of work. At first the teacher will have to do much guiding. A good plan is to take a topic or problem on which source material is available to the whole class and to develop together a common outline. Following class development of a study outline, each child may be assigned the task of working out another outline independently, possibly using a common source of material. Language books may provide useful exercises for training in outlining.

After they have prepared their reports, the children may give them to the class or group. During the training phases of the work, the reports are evaluated by the children and the teacher in terms of key goals. Worthy accomplishments are approved, and weak points requiring further training and improvement are noted.

Rapid maturation of ability cannot be expected or achieved; development is gradual. From handling material from one source in the elementary grades the children advance to handling material from several sources, at the junior high school level; and the process of reporting becomes vastly more complex and difficult. Inevitably the problem of dealing with conflicting statements and authorities arises, and children learn how to weigh sources, how to reconcile or explain differences, and how to draw sound conclusions and make inferences. The ability to gather and report information is so important in the later stages of schooling and in adult life that the teacher can afford to be patient and to be satisfied with a slow and steady improvement in ability.

#### **Example of Procedure: A Giving-reports lesson, Grade 6<sup>a</sup>**

##### *Situation*

The social studies center of interest was "Living in Greece Long Ago." The current theme about which reports centered was "What Greece Has Contributed."

<sup>a</sup> Provided by Miss Marjorie Brewster, former sixth-grade demonstration teacher of the College Elementary School, Fresno State College.

sticking to the point. A clear, definite, specific assignment, in which the topic is exactly defined by the teacher or class, will help pupils achieve unity in their reports; but if the assignment is vague, the report usually will be vague and confused. Procedures suggested earlier in the chapter should help in achieving unity. Given a specific goal, the reporter may still have difficulty, however, in sticking to it. It is well for the teacher to require, as a fundamental habit in reporting, that the child state early in his report just what he is trying to show or prove. In the evaluation period following the report—or possibly during the report if the irrelevancy is too obvious or wasteful of time—questions of pertinency may be raised. The reporter should have the first chance to judge his own report, but the class and teacher should add their critical comments. In a discussion of relevancy and unity, it may be helpful to write the main topic or problem on the board and to list under it the key points made.

A second problem concerns the difficulty of teaching the child to give the report in his own words when the material is taken from books. Often the whole report is lifted verbatim from the book; and frequently words, phrases, and sentences which clearly the reporter does not understand are quoted without source credit. Plagiarism of this sort may be due to unfamiliarity with the material or to laziness and indifferent preparation. It is well to insist on thorough preparation, even if the reports are limited in number or scope, and to have the child put the substance of the report in his own words. Questioning and discussion will reveal shortcomings and will generally tend to secure more careful preparation.

A third difficulty arises in connection with bringing together material from several sources and relating it to a particular topic or problem. This is a mature ability which appears late in the grades and the mastery of which continues to give difficulty through high school and college. A clean-cut breakdown of a topic or problem into specific subtopics will help. Mechanical aids, such as the use of sheets of paper or cards for separate topics, may be suggested for extensive reports. Having gathered the material and classified it by topics, the pupil is still faced with the problem of organizing the report. He must decide what the best order of topics is and how to join them in logical sequence so that his report will develop smoothly step by step.

A fourth difficulty arises from a fault of the teacher rather than of the pupil; that is, the material of the report is not used by the class in the solution of the problem under study. Presumably the information sought is needed in the consideration of a particular problem; therefore, the teacher should have the content of every report discussed and evaluated and its

*Objectives*

1. Development of rules for making clear explanations
2. Practice in giving directions to certain places

*Procedure*

1. What are we planning for next week? What is the meaning of Education Week?
2. How many of our parents are coming? How many have never visited school?
3. How will our parents be able to find us? How will other parents find the places they want to visit? (Discussion brings out the need for guides.)
4. All the teachers will be busy, and the principal suggests that our older pupils may wish to act as guides.
5. Have you ever asked a stranger to direct you to a certain place? Could you find it? Why?
6. What rules can we follow in giving directions? Discussion leads to the following:
  - a. Understand clearly what is asked for.
  - b. Be exact.
  - c. Arrange the steps in the proper order.
  - d. Be careful of left and right turns.
  - e. Leave out details that are not helpful and are possibly confusing.
  - f. Draw a diagram on paper, if it will help.
7. Suppose someone came to this room and asked for the principal's office; how would you direct him? Look at the rules again. Close your eyes and plan the directions. Open your eyes and check with the rules on the board
8. Individual children give directions to the class; the class evaluates according to the rules.
9. The pupils practice giving other directions:
  - a. To the school library.
  - b. To the lunchroom.
  - c. To the several grades.
  - d. To the playground.
10. The pupils who gave clear-cut directions were chosen by the class to act as guides during Education Week.

**Announcements and Advertisements.** School announcements and advertisements include news items of interest to the class (dictated by the pupils and written on the board by the teacher in primary grades); memoranda of room duties or other tasks to be performed by individuals or committees; bulletin-board notices of coming events; notices of lost and found articles; written and oral announcements of school events to parents and friends; poster advertisements of shows and sales, notices of club activities; and information on the decisions of pupil councils regarding school policies and rules of behavior.\*

\* Hatfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-197.

formulating questions in clear, concise form; listening attentively to avoid the necessity of repetitions; and taking brief notes on key points of facts.

Discussion and possibly dramatization provide the means of preparing children for interviewing. Discussion should bring out the key points noted above. The interview may be planned by the class, key points listed, etc. The dramatization of imaginary situations will help to clarify ideas and provide practice. The results of interviews, of course, should be reported to the class and assimilated. The class may also profitably consider reports of a child's experiences in conducting an interview, noting suggestions for future use.

**Minutes of Meetings.** Children have occasion to make records of group action taken in the meetings of the class, club, and school-government organization. Information is given in the reading of the minutes. This seems, therefore, to be a hybrid experience, involving both recording and reporting. Apart from the practical usefulness of such records in school and in later life, keeping minutes of meetings provides further training in certain generally useful language abilities, such as the ability to distinguish key points, to summarize discussion in simple, clear, concise language, and to report discussion and action accurately.

Occasions for teaching these abilities are situations in which there is a concrete need of minutes and records—usually some form of class organization. Certain teachers have used minutes in informal discussion where single pupils in turn may be designated as secretary; or for a time, at least, all pupils may simultaneously act as secretaries. The keeping of a summary, log, or diary serves as a record of progress in such activities as voluntary reading, radio listening, and nature study.

When the proper occasion arises, it is necessary to develop the new experience by direct instruction. Samples of minutes appropriate to the experience may be examined, key points noted, practice provided, and results evaluated and improved until satisfactory standards are reached.

**Filling in Blank Forms.** Filling in blank forms is recognized as a kind of experience in which children and adults must engage from time to time; and probably the importance of the forms and the need for improving accuracy in making them out are sufficiently great to justify some school attention. Typical activities are writing money orders, filling in library cards and school questionnaires, depositing money in a bank, subscribing for magazines, and ordering material by mail. Desired goals include supplying the information required accurately and concisely, legible handwriting or printing, capitalizing proper names, and punctuating dates correctly.

When occasions arise, the teacher should provide specific instructions,



phase of the work to stress the *why* as well as the *how* of making introductions. It may be pointed out that introductions serve to put people at ease, to make them feel a part of the group, and to overcome the awkwardness that often arises when people meet for the first time and have nothing to talk about. It should be stressed that such courtesy gives to the person being introduced a feeling of welcome and that it adds to the pleasure of the host. Children may report experiences at home, and they may refer to the textbook for models of procedure. When the situations that can possibly arise are thoroughly considered, it will be well to dramatize typical situations. Children may be chosen to represent various persons, and they may practice the necessary introductions before the class. Each dramatization should be followed by a discussion of key points, noting the use of approved procedures and difficulties. Difficulties should be discussed and possibly re-dramatized. Practice may be required to give assurance, and the teacher may suggest that the children use the situations arising at home for practice in the proper forms.

**Interviews.** The interview has importance in adult life, chiefly in securing jobs or employees. To some extent, children as well must use the interview for securing positions. In school, there is also an increasing use of the interview as a means of gathering material by word of mouth for use in working out problems in various phases of the school program, particularly in the social studies and health programs. Much of the interviewing is done with parents and friends; but it extends also to strangers—business people, officials, and heads of various community agencies. Specific situations in which children make use of the interview are the following:

1. Soliciting news or advertisements for a school newspaper
2. Asking parents for information on a topic of current interest to the class, as progress on the proposed St. Lawrence River waterway
3. Interviewing a fireman about his duties
4. Making an application for summer employment
5. Asking the support of a citizen for a school bond issue

Specific objectives concern the attitudes and techniques peculiar to or especially important in carrying on the experience. Because the person interviewed is frequently a busy person and the service is voluntary, it is necessary for the interviewer to make an appointment in advance. The interviewer should be prompt, state directly what information is wanted, avoid wasting time on nonessentials, and leave promptly. The importance of the person being interviewed suggests courtesy in address, tact in formulating questions, and an expression of appreciation for a favor. Language techniques include listing the key points on which information is desired;

working out of typical exercises, is defensible. Whether this should be done in the language period or elsewhere is for the teacher to decide.

## EXERCISES

1. Make a tentative list of the kinds of information-giving experiences appropriate to a selected grade.
2. Make a check list of important abilities and skills used in giving oral reports. If practical, use the list in checking the accomplishments and needs of a class.
3. Plan a discussion-developmental procedure for one information-giving experience.
4. Plan a dramatization procedure for one information-giving experience in which such dramatization is appropriate.
5. Observe a class giving reports. Evaluate. Note weaknesses and suggest means for improvement.
6. Prepare an announcement or advertisement that might serve as a model for children at a particular grade level. What items should be included?
7. What is good listening in an information-giving experience?

## REFERENCES

- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, pp. 86-92.
- : *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, pp. 42-43, 76-77, 172-173.
- and Frieda H. Dingee: *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 28-30.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, pp. 153-158, 166-170, 174-176, 191-205.
- Herrick, Virgil E., and Leland B. Jacobs: *Children and the Language Arts*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955, pp. 137-144.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp. 261-262, 296-301, 362.
- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, pp. 143-160, 195-203.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, pp. 313, 317.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 118-119, 286-287.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, pp. 150, 190-191, 325-328.

emphasizing the key points and giving reasons for them. Practice exercises may be used, if the teacher considers them necessary.

**Taking Tests.** Taking tests has not been recognized generally as a language experience; but it is a legitimate topic for consideration in a language program because giving information is clearly the purpose of the usual test. The test is an important phase of school business at all grade levels, and children's ability to record information therein can certainly be improved.

Tests take many forms, ranging from the subjective essay to the true-false objective test. Each form brings into play specific abilities. Apart from some of the tricks which may serve to conceal ignorance rather than to reveal information and knowledge—and which teachers may not care to publicize—certain principles and procedures common to many kinds of tests may be taught with profit.

Certainly one *sine qua non* of test taking is the careful reading of the question. (How often do pupils, and even college students, give a perfectly good answer to a question that is not asked!) Careful reading should reveal the key point in the question and indicate the scope of the answer required; much time is wasted in irrelevancies. The child should be taught to do exactly what he is asked to do and nothing more. The question may be limited in scope, as in the true-false test, or it may offer opportunity to bring together selected materials on a large topic, as in the essay test. But in any case, the pupil should first analyze the question and its intention and then frame his answer accordingly. In the essay question, time should be taken for a rapid mental review of available information, selection of pertinent points, sketching a brief outline, and final organization of the answer.

A second point that can be profitably emphasized concerns the distribution of time according to the number and difficulty of the questions or exercises. A glance through the whole test may suggest an approximate time schedule. A third point is to generally take up the questions in the sequence given, not in the order of easy ones first. A fourth is to notice the method of scoring. The scoring method often determines whether the pupil should or should not guess, and it may reveal that some questions carry a higher point score than others. A fifth—and very important—point advises checking answers for omissions and accuracy. Time should be allowed for this checking because a considerable number of errors in many examinations are due to carelessness. The sixth point is to be accurate in copying where copying is necessary, as in arithmetic. Language abilities and skills, including the mechanics of punctuation, spelling, and handwriting, should not receive major emphasis except in the language-testing exercise.

Some direct test-taking instruction, through discussion, analysis, and the

utes to and determines these abilities. For example, the effort of putting into words just what takes place in performing an experiment clarifies and deepens for the pupil his understanding of what he has seen and at the same time enriches and sharpens his language. An important contribution of language to study and research abilities is made in the imparting of information, whether that information appears in connection with problem solving or with some other kind of schoolwork, curricular or extracurricular.

For practical purposes, the language experiences in study and research are grouped and treated somewhat arbitrarily—and with considerable overlapping—under the following heads: (1) making records and charts; (2) preparing problems, questions, outlines, and lists; (3) writing notes and summaries; (4) preparing indexes and bibliographies; and (5) using the dictionary. It will be noticed that the grouping follows to some extent the steps in problem solving listed at the beginning of the chapter but that the order of treatment is not the same. An attempt has been made to secure in the present list an order of treatment generally corresponding to actual use in school. This order of use is determined, in turn, by need in connection with various school activities and by the maturity and readiness of the pupils.

## RECORDS AND CHARTS

Records and charts are means of compiling, organizing, and presenting the factual phases of schoolwork. Facts may be summarized in brief, pointed sentences, taking the form of a unified paragraph, log, or diary; or they may be put in the form of a table, chart, or graph. The nature of the material and the preference of the teacher determine the forms used. Various uses of record keeping include recording the results of experiments; recording observations of weather, birds, signs of spring, and the like; showing progress in the study of certain topics or problems; recording the results of an interview; making records of interesting events, such as a play day or the visit of a fireman; summarizing a survey of community needs and practices, as in a health report or a record of the uses of decimals; writing a receipt; and cataloguing information on interesting books. Information gathered and recorded will serve a variety of purposes. Some information may be used as resource material in the further study of a topic or problem, some may be used as the basis for a report to the class by a group or individual, and some may constitute a part of the study of a larger unit by a group or an individual.

## Study and Research

Study and research commonly take the form of problem solving and follow the customary problem-solving procedure: (1) setting up a topic or problem that may be used for the study of a significant area of the curriculum, such as the westward movement, life in colonial times, how animals protect themselves, and form in music or art; (2) breaking down the topic or problem into significant subtopics, problems, or questions; (3) locating available information; (4) gathering information, possibly from several sources, and making memoranda of information pertinent to a particular topic; and (5) organizing into a coherent, orderly whole selected information bearing on one or more topics. It will be observed at once that this list represents a logical series of steps which mature students and adults use in the serious study of any topic or problem and also represents the culmination of years of training, consisting of work on the specific abilities and skills which are the constituent elements of the total mature performance.

Just what contribution does language make and what part does language training play in the development of good habits of study? We are dealing here with informational phases of schoolwork, of course; and the principal methods of securing information are reading, observing, and listening. Because efficient study depends, in general, upon the ability to get information by means of these chief methods, it depends more specifically upon the ability to understand what is read, seen, and heard. Good reading, observing, and listening involve more than passive, uncritical absorption or comprehension; they require powers of selectivity, evaluation, interpretation, application, organization, and summarization—active processes of thinking. Language, as the primary means and form of thought, therefore, contrib-

of the series of charts was "Our Bee Book." Beforehand, however, certain questions were set up for study:

1. When there are no flowers, what do the bees do?
2. Does a bee go from one flower to another without first returning to the hive?
3. What are the enemies of the bee?
4. Why does a bee have a sting?
5. Why do bees swarm?
6. How many bees live in one hive?
7. What kind of bees are there in a hive?
8. What is the work of the queen?
9. What is the work of the worker and of the drone?
10. How many queens in a hive? Why? How did she get there?

As the study progressed, new words learned were listed on a class chart under its own title:

#### WORDS WE KNOW

wax	pollen	comb	honey
nectar	pollen basket	bee	drone
queen	workers	egg	larva
royal jelly	guards	water carriers	busy
housekeepers	sting	bee bread	dust
flowers	abdomen	hive	legs
tongue	buzz	head	six-sided
fanning	wings	eat	compound
hang	cradle cell	ventilation	farsighted
eye	hairs	near	gather
six	leg comb	nurse	gum

Information was gathered, formulated into sentences, and organized under several heads:

#### OUR BEE BOOK

There are three kinds of bees in a hive.

The bees are the queens, the workers, and the drones.

The bees swarm sometimes.

The bees have six legs.

The bees have five eyes. Two of them are compound eyes to see far away.

The small eyes are hard for us to see because they are protected by little hairs.

#### *The Queen*

The queen doesn't work, but she does lay eggs.

The queen lays thousands of eggs a day.

The queen is fed royal jelly.

The queen has a sting, but she uses it to place the eggs.

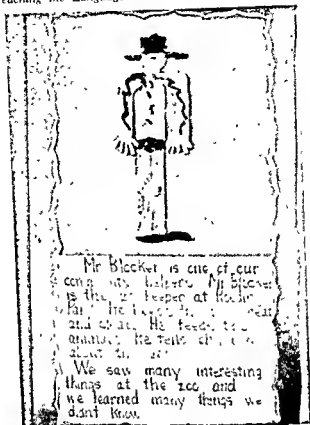


Fig. 8-1. An experience chart, first grade. (Courtesy of Hazel Lambert)

**Experience Chart.** One of the study-research report forms that appears early in the grades is the experience chart. It is developed as a report of an observation or field trip, a summary of the study of a special topic or problem, or a record of a special event or experience. It is commonly used in the low first grade to provide a source of easy, meaningful reading material and occasionally for the same purpose in later grades when the children are retarded in reading.

An example of the experience chart is provided by Cecelia Ham.<sup>1</sup> This unit centered in the study of bees, and the chart was used as a study guide and as a means of organizing and recording information gained. The title

<sup>1</sup> Demonstration teacher, second grade, College Elementary School, Fresno State College, Fresno, Calif.

weather observations. The days of the week or month may be listed, and opposite each day are placed weather notes such as *clear*, *cloudy*, and *rainy* and information about temperature and wind direction.

In keeping a one-week record, primary children used the following words to describe the weather accurately:

February 21. Bitter cold, bright, snowy, crisp

February 22. Very cold, windy, drifting

February 23. Stormy, blustery, occasional sunshine

February 24. Light snow, dull, mild

The following record of weather conditions was kept by a fourth-grade child. It was well worded, concise, accurate, and descriptive enough to be interesting, and represents quite a mature form of expression: \*

Sunday, November 20th, in the afternoon, it started to rain and snow. At night the streets were covered with slush. All night it snowed. On Monday, November 21st, all the town was covered with snow.

In the second grade, possibly as an early-spring unit, the children may record observations of birds, noting name, date of appearance, place seen, and who saw the bird. Numerous uses for the tabular chart are found throughout the grades in areas of health and safety, nature study, the social studies, and arithmetic.

In addition to providing familiarity with tabular forms, the chart furnishes training in certain specific language abilities and skills such as selecting important information, being exact in observing and in recording, using accurate, clear, concise, descriptive words, securing logical organization, writing dates and proper names, using appropriate written mechanics such as capitals, periods, colons, and semicolons, and writing neatly and legibly.

In the primary grades the tabular chart is commonly developed as a class enterprise; in the intermediate grades and in the upper grades, individual and group work is possible. Developmental procedure requires, in the first place, a worthy occasion for a record or chart that serves an immediate purpose in the activity. A study of the proper form of the record follows as a second step. In making a bird chart, for example, attention must be given to essential items, arrangement, and spacing. The form may be dictated by the teacher or developed with contributions from the class, depending on the maturity and experience of the pupils. Often models are helpful. If the record is an individual one for individual use, it is well to

\* Dorothy L. Brown and Marguerite Butterfield, *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, pp. 151-152. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.



*The Workers*

The workers are the busiest bees.  
The workers gather pollen and nectar.  
The workers make royal jelly.  
The worker bees make wax.  
The worker bees are nurse bees.  
The workers fan the hive.  
The workers make bee bread.  
The workers make bee gum.  
The worker bees make a cradle cell from wax.  
The worker bees are guards.  
The workers wash the queen.  
The workers are water carriers.

The development of an experience chart is commonly a class enterprise with contributions from all the children under the direction of the teacher. The teacher solicits contributions on important points observed, insists on wording in complete sentences, and writes the sentences on the board as dictated by the children. When the important points have been covered in satisfactory sentences, the teacher and the children review the sentences, eliminating duplications and combining similar sentences. Attention is then given to organization: What should be said first? What next? What would make a good concluding sentence? Recording the chart in its final form on a large sheet of manila paper provides a permanent record for future class use. This procedure was followed in developing the charts reported above.

In addition to providing training in some of the simpler mechanics of written expression—such as formulating simple sentences, using periods and question marks at the end of sentences, and using capital letters at the beginning of sentences and in titles—the experience chart offers opportunities for pupils to develop some understanding of more advanced qualities of good composition. Because the chart is primarily informational, basic concern focuses upon its accuracy and reliability. Conciseness is also recognized as an important factor. Such conciseness, clarity, and accuracy of expression require, in turn, the selection of precise and appropriate words and expressions. The importance of organization is emphasized in choosing a central theme or topic, in sticking to it, and in arranging sentences so that there is a logical sequence of ideas.

**Tabular Record Charts.** Another common and useful form of record is the tabular chart, which is a brief catalogue of essential information about selected key items, showing comparisons, relationships, and possibly changes in time. Such a chart may be used in the first grade to record

A word of caution at this point may not be amiss. Once an interest has developed in a project such as the one described above, children in their zeal can become nuisances around the scene of construction. For this reason, it may be better for the teacher to appoint a committee who will report on the project or at intervals to take the group as a whole to observe progress in construction.

At times, the diary takes the form of an individual record of intimate personal experiences, and this form to some extent introduces elements of emotion and imagination which are characteristic of creative writing; but even the diary of personal experiences has some basis in facts. Dawson and Miller treat the personal diary as a form of writing for fun and give the following as a model for sixth-grade children: <sup>2</sup>

Dad and I went to an illustrated lecture on Mexico. Most interesting of all to me were the pictures of the birth of a volcano. The volcano, which was named Paricutin, had suddenly erupted from a level pasture with such a flow of lava that it covered houses and barns. In a week it was 140 feet high. After that week the volcano became quiet again.

Broening gives a sample diary at the more mature high school level, which shows the expression of personal feelings taking priority over mere facts. The first paragraph is reproduced here: <sup>3</sup>

Just four days ago, June 1, I had a new and thrilling experience. Upon our beautiful, rolling greens was placed a memorial which will be dear to the hearts of Easternites in the years to come. Diary, this memorial is lovely; so tender and sweet in its thought and yet so strong and stalwart in its material structure, that it filled me with a sort of reverence for the one to whom it was dedicated. The recipient of this honor, Miss Lizette Woodworth Reese, a Baltimore Poetess, just like you has been my companion in lonely hours, a source of pleasant thoughts, and inspiration. In my solitude, a furtive glance at your pages or intensive reading of Miss Reese's poems gave me companionship; in my sadness, stealthy peeks at your amusing and happy-go-lucky sheets and heartening reflections upon Miss Reese's lighter poems gave me pleasure; and in the depths of despair, recollections of my previously inscribed happier days and thoughts of Miss Reese's climb to fame gave me encouragement. Yes, Diary, Miss Reese has certainly become an additional link in my chain of friends.

As guiding principles in preparing a diary, Dawson and Miller list the following: <sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Mildred A. Dawson and Jonnie M. Miller, *Language for Daily Use, Grade Six*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1948, p. 244. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

<sup>3</sup> Angela M. Broening, *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, p. 144. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

<sup>4</sup> Dawson and Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

reach an agreement as to the exact form. After preparing the form, the pupil takes the next step by collecting and recording data. Key points in this phase of the experience are selecting important facts and arranging them in orderly form. In handling individual records, the teacher must, either through class discussion or through individual help, give his pupils some instruction in selecting and recording material. A check list of goals serves to emphasize such crucial points, helps in locating weaknesses, and functions as a record of progress.

**Diaries.** Keeping a diary is a form of writing experience that may reasonably be considered under the general heading of study and research experiences. The classification is a logical one when the diary relates closely to some phase of schoolwork, whether class or individual. Thus a class, even as young as the kindergarten, may record in diary form significant experiences in building a post office, caring for a pet in the classroom, observing the behavior of a robin, or planting and caring for a garden. The record is still primarily a factual one when a class or individual writes a story of a bird or animal in the first person. The characteristics of the factual diary are similar to those of the other record forms treated earlier in the section.

Useful in social studies may be a diary of the progress of any new construction job which the children pass on the way to school. Keen observers, if encouraged to pool and share their observations of such projects as a new bridge, road, pavement, building, or dam, may provide the stimulus which will lead the children to a mine of information and acquaint them with new facts as well as new words and meanings. Fourth- or fifth-grade children may keep individual diaries in which they record the day when the excavation began, when cement was mixed and poured, when carpenters began work, etc. Terms such as *rivet*, *girder*, *beam*, *joist*, and *sill* may be listed and learned. Materials such as plaster, glass, copper, steel, and iron; and machines such as steam shovel, riveting machine, hammer, and screw driver may be named and studied. Young children may report information regarding all these matters to the teacher, who will keep the class diary on the board and add to it from day to day.

Considerable incidental learning takes place in a project like this. Much reading is necessary both by the children and the teacher to get essential information. It is the teacher's responsibility to provide drill to correct errors in the mechanics of oral and written expression. Music, art, spelling, science, health, safety education, reading, and arithmetic will all find a way into the project if the teacher is alert and open minded—and he will find his own interests broadening with the experience.

4. How is a fire department organized?
5. How do firemen live?
6. How are firemen trained?
7. How can we help prevent fire?
8. How much is lost in a fire, and how can we protect ourselves against loss by fire?
9. Who pays for the fire department?
10. How did people protect themselves from fire in earlier times?

In the later grades a mature, well-trained class, in the study of a large unit, may be invited to set up a key problem such as, How can we account for the delayed exploitation and development of Africa? How do animals protect themselves against their enemies? What should be accomplished in a unit on safety or community health? Implied in the ability to set up large questions or problems for the study of a unit is some preliminary knowledge of the unit and the ability to search for and recognize large integrating issues. Discovering and formulating significant problems requires thinking of a high order; and thinking, as we have found, is closely correlated to language. Sound thinking and the statement of an idea in clear, vigorous language are inseparably related. Whether the basic idea is expressed as a topic, problem, generalization, rule, or principle is not so important as the

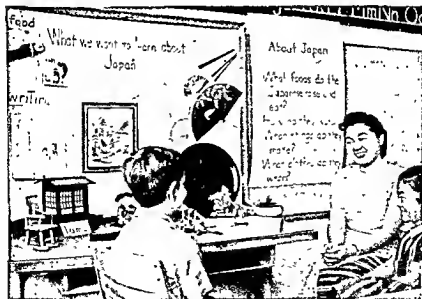


Fig. 8-2. Problems for study are found in examining an exhibit of objects and in interviewing a resource person. (Courtesy of Len Bathurst)

## HOW TO KEEP A DIARY

1. Choose interesting experiences that arouse your thoughts and feelings.
2. Express what you thought or felt in the best sentences you can build.
3. Choose the best words to express your ideas clearly.
4. Do not try to write too much. A well-written paragraph or half page is better than a poorly written page.
5. Date every entry.
6. Observe correct forms in writing.

Hatfield lists specific enabling objectives generally relating to the keeping of individual journals and diaries.\*

As to its use in school, the teacher will recognize that the diary may be used in many of the same situations as the experience chart and that its purposes are similar. Both are records of facts and experiences; the choice is a matter of personal preference. The use of both provides variety. The personal diary is a kind of language experience appropriate for general use in the intermediate and upper grades. It is the kind of experience that will appeal strongly to some but not to all pupils. It should be optional; to handle it otherwise would defeat one of the primary purposes.

**Problems and Questions.** In the beginning of a study of any large informational area of the curriculum it is necessary, first, to set up as a goal of study an important theme, principle, or generalization; and second, to break it down into subproblems or topics to provide a basis for systematic study, including gathering and recording information. Both phases of study bring into play important language abilities that are properly treated in this section.

The teacher naturally assumes the major responsibility for setting up major goals of understanding in the lower primary grades; but beginning with the third grade and increasingly beyond this grade, the teacher expects the children to share in that responsibility. Thus, in the third grade the children may help formulate and consider such questions as, What are the primary needs of primitive people, and how do they meet them? How is the regrouping in addition in the second decade different from that in the first decade of arithmetic? How do animals prepare for winter? How can we protect ourselves against colds? In a unit on "How Do Firemen Help Us?" the teacher and pupils listed the following questions for study:

1. What should one do in the case of fire?
2. What do firemen do at a fire?
3. What equipment do firemen use?

\* W. W. Hatfield, *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, p. 198.

The pupils will need help with the outline form, the use of letters and numerals for topics, arrangement and spacing, and capitalization and punctuation. Ideas of correct form may be obtained from the study of models or dictated by the teacher. The significance of the form in showing relationships between ideas should be emphasized. The teacher and class together may profitably prepare an outline for the study of a typical topic or problem, or possibly several. Individual performance in outlining follows a group assignment. Outlines are compared, differences noted, and suggestions for improvement given. Opportunities for preparing outlines in all appropriate phases of the work should be utilized.

An example of an outlining experience is provided by the work of the pupils of the third grade of the Fresno State College Elementary School, who, under the direction of Mrs. Viola Moseley, were beginning the study of a unit on the Netherlands. By way of introduction, the teacher read a story, "The Dutch Twins," by Perkins. Discussion then revealed that the pupils would like to play living in Holland. They immediately realized that in order to play they would need information and materials. Books were found in the library and at home. Materials were collected and prepared for use and for exhibit. The contributions of pupils were examined and were listed on a chart prepared for that purpose. During the progress of the activity questions arose: Why can Wilhelmina skate? Why do we always think of windmills when we think of Hans? Do Dutch children love dogs? More information was needed. The items on Holland were outlined as follows:

- |                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Location            | 4. Occupations           |
| a. Land features       | a. Farming               |
| b. Climate             | b. Dairying              |
| 2. People              | c. Fishing               |
| a. Dress               | d. Shipping              |
| b. Manners and customs | 5. Schools               |
| 3. Homes               | 6. Amusements            |
| a. Outside             | a. Holidays: Easter,     |
| b. Inside, including   | Christmas                |
| furnishings            | b. Special celebrations: |
|                        | Kermis                   |
|                        | 7. Exports               |
|                        | 8. Imports               |

The outline was then used as a basis for study and for preparing reports.

**Lists.** Similar to the outline in form, but simpler in organization, is the list: a shopping memorandum, materials needed in a construction activity, items for a party, equipment for a field trip, the contents of a first-aid kit,

procedures that a teacher might use, is provided by Dawson and Miller for children at the sixth-grade level: \*

### *Taking Notes*

When you locate information that you need, read the paragraph, page, or passage closely. Look for the facts you need in order to answer fully the questions that your committee has given you.

Have at hand a notebook or a package of cards. Take notes of the important facts. Use a different page or card for the notes from each book you read.

Below are some notes that Paul wrote. Study the form in which he set them down.

#### INFLUENCE OF FORESTS

*World Book Ency.* Vol. V, p. 2291: topic, "Erosion"

How forests prevent erosion

—foliage breaks force of downfall

—sod mat under trees absorbs water

How forests prevent floods

—soil retains much of water

—rest drains off slowly into springs or streams

I. Notice the topic at the top of the card. How will this be of help to Paul when he begins to outline his facts for a report?

Always put the topic or problem at the top of a page or card of notes.

II. Paul recorded the source of his facts. Why is this useful? Such a record is called a *reference*.

What abbreviations did Paul use in his notes? For what does each stand? Is it correct to use abbreviations in taking notes?

III. Why is it helpful to group notes under topics?

IV. In taking notes follow these standards:

### *Standards for Taking Notes*

1. Use a separate card or page for notes from each source.
2. Write the topic at the top.
3. Quote the reference.
4. Group facts under topics.
5. Record facts accurately.
6. Write neatly.

The study-language experiences of note taking and summarizing are characteristic of those phases of the curricular, and to some extent extra-curricular, program that deal with getting and understanding information. In the beginning grades the pupils make mental notes from observations and interviews and give them to the class orally; and they frequently com-

\* Dawson and Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-225.

## USE OF THE DICTIONARY

The dictionary is used largely for checking pronunciation and clarifying meaning in close connection with various information-getting subjects—reading, social studies, arithmetic. "Dictionary training for the interpretation of reading materials will not necessarily enable the individual to use the dictionary effectively in facilitating his own expression. Use for expression purposes must be taught as definitely and specifically as spelling and handwriting."<sup>11</sup> Trabue points out that the dictionary is a reference book containing much more material than the pupil will need at one time. The pupil consults the dictionary for a particular purpose, and he must learn to find and select the information he needs and to ignore other information. Some facts of permanent value, such as the spelling of a common word, are to be memorized at the time; other facts have a temporary use. Trabue also points out that instruction should be arranged and graded in "sequential steps" and that attention must be given to individual differences in readiness.

**Sequence of Steps.** Before pupils start to use a commercial dictionary, they should be fully familiar with the alphabetical order of letters. In the first two grades they begin memorizing letters and arranging small groups of words in order according to the initial letters. They next make their own dictionaries of useful words, employing the word box at the second-grade level and the notebook at the third. They become further acquainted with alphabetical lists in their readers and spellers. Alphabetizing by all letters is not learned, however, before the fifth grade.

The first practical use of the dictionary by pupils in the third grade is to check the spelling of familiar words. Preparation for this use has been made through employing their own dictionaries and the spelling lists in textbooks for the same purpose. Related to this experience, but coming in the fourth grade, is learning syllabication. Syllables are noted in reading and spelling. A practical need for such knowledge appears in written work when it is necessary to divide the word at the end of a line.

Use of the dictionary to verify the pronunciation of common words comes at about the fifth-grade level. Marks for the long and short sounds of vowels and the accent are learned first; other diacritical marks are learned as needed. Attention is also called to the preferred spelling, which is the first given.

<sup>11</sup> Trabue and others, *op. cit.*, 187.



- pany, Boston, 1939, pp. 189-194 (records); 202-205 (summaries); 205-206 (bibliography); 207-208 (notes and outlines).
- Michaelis, John U.: *Social Studies for Children in a Democracy*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1956, pp. 339-343.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, pp. 286-289.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 60-63 (lists, outlines, questions); 64 (problems), 124-127 (charts); 187-193 (dictionary).

The final use of the dictionary is to note the exact meaning of words that are vaguely familiar. Attention is called to the several meanings listed, and drill is provided in the selection of the meaning appropriate to the immediate use. The study of synonyms and antonyms may be used to enrich and vary pupils' expression at about the fifth- or sixth-grade level.

Language books provide graded exercises for use in the several grades. One book for the fourth grade provides exercises for accent, alphabetical order, definitions, use of guide words, pronunciation, and synonyms.<sup>17</sup> Instruction on a particular step in dictionary study is provided for the class or group when there is an immediate need and when the pupils are ready for such instruction. Demonstrations and explanations are key procedures. Practice exercises may be provided as prepared by the teacher or selected from textbooks or workbooks. Advantage should be taken of opportunities to use the new skill in purposeful situations. Checking and supervision should be continued until mastery is attained. As in other phases of language work, sensitivity to quality of performance—a language consciousness—must be cultivated.

## EXERCISES

1. Outline an appropriate study-research experience for a particular grade such as an experience chart, a tabular record, a study list, or an outline.
2. Write a model summary on one topic.
3. Report from a textbook or workbook a specific training exercise in using a dictionary.

## REFERENCES

- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, pp. 62, 72 (dictionary); 151, 189 (records); 158 (charts).
- Dawson, Mildred A., and Frieda H. Dingee: *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 44-45 (summaries).
- and Marian Zoffinger: *Guiding Language Learning*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chap. 8.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, pp. 197-201 (records); 201-205 (summaries and outlines); 205-207 (bibliographies and indexes).
- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Com-

<sup>17</sup> Harold G. Shane and others, *On the Trail to Good English*, Laidlaw Brothers, Inc., New York, 1956, pp. 88-94.

sible that no separate instruction and training on elements will be required. This will be recognized as an extremely well-integrated program. The development of abilities and skills in connection with real language experiences is, of course, ideal—the instructional goal toward which teachers are striving. But the observation of teaching indicates that some specific, separate attention to abilities and skills is common. Courses of study and textbooks devote considerable space to these parts of the language program, implying a necessity for definite instruction. Just how much of the time devoted to language can profitably be given to directed work on abilities and skills in separate periods depends on a number of things: the amount of time given to real experiencing in language, the utilization of opportunities in other areas of schoolwork for language development, the recognition of language goals, the skill of the teacher, and the accepted philosophy of education.

In this chapter we are concerned with the elements of attitudes, courtesies, content, and organization. These elements are recognized at once as basic in all language experiences. They provide motivation for experiences. They are concerned with *what* is spoken or written.<sup>1</sup>

## ATTITUDES

Willingness to participate and a desire to achieve fluency are generally regarded as basic dynamics of expression—the means of securing voluntary and free participation. Willingness to participate is important in all language work, particularly in the creative phases. Noteworthy is the striking contrast between willingness to speak outside the school and reluctance to speak inside the school. Too often the school inhibits rather than encourages free expression. There must be a real desire to speak and write in the school, and children must find satisfaction in the expression of ideas. The many situations requiring purposeful expression should stimulate willing participation.<sup>2</sup> Durrell says, "The need for motivation of the language-arts program and the specific motivation of individual pupils within a class must be a matter of first concern to the teacher in building a language-arts program."<sup>3</sup>

## Attitudes, Courtesies, Content, and Organization

In Chapter 2 an attempt was made to identify the chief lines of growth in language and to recognize thereby the kinds of experiences that the school should provide. A comparison was made between growth in language and growth in other areas of the curriculum, such as music, industrial arts, social studies, and health. A distinction was made between language experiences (conversation, dramatization, reporting) and the elements or factors that condition the experiences (willingness to participate, finding something appropriate to say, using acceptable mechanics of oral and written expression). Comparable phases in the game of football were noted. It was pointed out that a properly balanced language program requires both participation in natural, lifelike experiences and instruction and training in component abilities and skills.

We have dealt with language experiences in the immediately preceding chapters. We now turn to those parts of the language program that concern instruction and training in abilities and skills.

The child in the oral phases of language—talking, reporting, conversing, etc.—necessarily selects something to say, uses words, forms sentences, and vocalizes. In written phases of the work—reports, story, verse, letters, summaries—the child is concerned with content, words, sentences, sticking to a point, paragraphing, punctuating, capitalizing, spelling, and the like. In both oral and written expression the child grows in ability and skill elements as he grows in experiences. If the oral and written experiences are sufficiently frequent, and if sufficient attention is paid to the ability and skill elements in the experiences while they are under way, it is pos-

were quick to compliment him without calling attention to the shortcomings of his so-called story:

The Tarkey Farm  
Is running out of tarkey  
and he is happy  
and the end

A second fundamental condition for free, fluent participation is having something to say. Topics chosen for conversation, discussion, storytelling, and the like should tap sources of familiar experiences concerning which children have knowledge, ideas, and interest. The alert teacher finds a wealth of suitable topics in children's hobbies, current experiences outside



Fig. 9-1. Children have something to say about matters of concern to them. (Courtesy of Congdon Campus School, Potsdam, N.Y.)

Closely related to willingness to participate is the desire for improvement. The desire to say something leads naturally to the desire to say it effectively, to note and correct deficiencies, to profit from criticisms and suggestions—in general, to work for improvement. Desire to improve operates in both oral and written language experiences.

**Processes, Conditions, and Means.** What can the teacher do to help his pupils develop good attitudes in language? The primary attack is to set up conditions in the class that invite and entice children to participate. Attitudes are elusive, caught by suggestion and environmental stimulation; they are by-products of the total language program. Interest is caught, not provided on demand. One can require a child to learn the correct use of *lie* and *lay*; one cannot require that he *want* to tell a story or write a poem.

A basic condition encouraging willing participation in oral experiences is an interested audience—someone to talk to. Seegers says, "It is not only the young child who is encouraged and made fluent by an interested audience. Older children are affected similarly, and grown people also are more likely to speak freely and fluently in situations which are familiar and engender self-confidence, especially in those which cause them to desire to communicate thought." \* The teacher himself should be attentive and sympathetic. His example will tend to set a pattern for the class; but at times he will find it necessary to emphasize the responsibility of the audience and to suggest appropriate behavior, such as maintaining attention, showing appreciation, and giving constructive criticisms.

Approval, to be helpful, must be genuine and hearty, but also discriminating in holding the speaker to reasonably high standards of performance. Merit and effort should be praised, but cant and hypocrisy exposed. Here again individual differences must be recognized. The shy child needs the encouragement of generous approval; the overaggressive, loquacious child profits from critical evaluation. The judicious distribution of criticism is so complicated by personal considerations that the teacher may find it necessary to control the amount of class participation. Some educators claim that the teacher should do the criticizing, particularly in the lower grades. Other teachers report profitable results from class criticisms. Possibly it is sufficient to warn the teacher of the potential danger of improper criticism and to leave the extent of class participation to his judgment. Consider, for example, the case of eleven-year-old Erwin, who had never produced even the simplest kind of written expression. When, after profound effort, he managed to write the following story, teacher and classmates alike realized that something remarkable had happened, and they

\* *Ibid.*, p. 39

## A DOG

I am a German Shepherd Seeing Eye Dog. My name is Rover.

One day I was leading my master down street. We went to cross the street when a car was coming. I stepped in front of my master too fast and pushed him down. He struck his head on a cement curb. I barked but he did not get up. Some people heard me and came running. When they saw what I had done a couple of men picked my master up. One woman called the doctor and ambulance.

The ambulance took my master to something called a hospital and a tall kind man took me to his home.

The house was big and white with green grass all around it. I was very lonesome.

One day the man got out of his car. He told me to get into it. The man had my harness in his hand. I thought something was wrong but when the man stopped the car in front of the hospital and I saw my master I jumped quickly out of the car and right into my master's arms. After that I was more careful.

Freedom *not* to participate in an experience is important. The predicament of the child who is forced to take part is vividly described by Ethel H. Ludin: \*

So many times when children hear that the English lesson is to consist of short talks, a chill of sudden dread strikes them. Talk? What about? Why? Stand up before the class and make a speech? Oh, joyless English lesson! The typical youngster visualizes himself standing before his classmates, blundering on, and looking into maliciously twinkling or solemnly critical eyes—or, even worse, gazing with a semi-hypnotic stare at nothing at all and somehow getting through. The announcement, therefore, that no one would have to speak unless he had something to say was greeted with joy. It was evident that our plan of procedure should be based on this note.

Not every topic will prove stimulating to every child. Only the exceptional child, easily identified by the teacher, will have something to say on each subject. The teacher may very well give attention to the child who never has anything to say. If lack of participation is due to ignorance, a special report and special preparation are in order; if due to excessive shyness, the teacher will take occasion to stimulate and encourage. Individualization of assignments is often the means of giving the reluctant the necessary push to participate.

The importance of maintaining reasonable standards in all phases of the school program can be noted in its effect on attitude. The teacher cannot expect the children to give allegiance to high standards of expression

\* Jess S. Hudson and others, *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, p. 296. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

the school, curricular activities, and in-school experiences; but individual freedom of choice within a suggested area is important. Specific procedures will be required at times to stimulate discussion and help recall information, such as the use of pictures for young children and children with language handicaps.

The third obvious factor in developing a good language attitude among children is a strong reason for expression, a situation that presents a real, immediate occasion for speaking or writing. Strong purpose increases clarity of thought and fluency and conviction of speech; it decreases the inhibiting effect of shyness by making the child idea-conscious rather than people-conscious.

Involved in several of the points made above is the implication that reasonable standards should be set in terms of individual capacities. The goals should be sufficient in breadth and depth to stimulate every child in the class to make his best effort; but it would be folly to set the same standards for every child. Nothing is more discouraging than continually being required or urged to attempt the impossible. Each child should be encouraged and expected to strive for the goals of which he is capable. Comparisons with other children may be harmful. Differences are natural and wholesome. The child of inferior language ability should not be patronized and certainly not blamed. But all goals should be definite and well conceived, not vague. The importance of this point is emphasized by Cook: "Certainly the most important factor in the learning situation is the goal of the learner. What the goal is and the intensity with which the learner strives toward it determine what is learned." \*

An unimaginative child may write about a simple happening; but if he is earnestly striving to express himself, commendation should be forthcoming. Such a child was Patricia, who wrote the following:

#### THE CARDS

Last night my friends came to my house and we played a game of cards and they played some of their tricks yts the cards and at 8 o'clock I went to bed and they went home the end

The teacher remarked, "Patricia has told us what a pleasant time she had with her friends last night, hasn't she?" and let it go at that. When opportunity arose she would emphasize run-on sentences and hope that Patricia would benefit without direct criticism of her work.

In the same group Peggy, a much more mature child, wrote the following story, prompted no doubt by a blind man who, with his seeing-eye dog, visited the school:

\* *Ibid.*, p. 195.





Fig 9-2. Listening attentively is stimulating to the reporter. (Courtesy of Bakersfield, Calif., city schools)

best provided in actual situations. Thus courtesy is seen by pupils not as an end in itself, but as a means of adequately meeting these situations. Ideas, attitudes, and abilities that define and characterize courteous behavior in general may then evolve. Situations for the practice of courtesy arise constantly.

A primary group suggested the following letter of appreciation and apology to a neighboring teacher who weekly invited them to see films in her room:

Dear Miss LaVerne,

We appreciate the invitation to movies on Fridays and we enjoy the films that you show. We hope it does not bother the other children when we come in late.

Sincerely,

Room 15

The meaning of and need for courtesy can be explained and developed by discussion. Standards appropriate to the grade level and maturity of the children can be set, along with other standards concerning content, organization, speech, written form, and the like. The examination of good models is similarly helpful, as in letter writing or introductions. Explanation and discussion are useful in handling the knowledge phases of the work, such

that are observed only in the language class or that make good language a cloak to be worn only on special occasions. If there is virtue and value in good language, it should be used on all occasions.

## COURTESIES

In handling courtesies, as in handling other phases of the language program, it is impossible to disassociate development in the area from the larger social development of which it is naturally a part. Development of courtesy is fundamentally development in sympathetic understanding and sensitivity to the thoughts and feelings of others, a desire to please, and growth in desire and ability to use language that will show understanding, consideration, and interest and will avoid unintentional hurt or offense. Courtesy is evidence of social maturity. Language is both a means and an end of social adjustment.

**Objectives.** An analysis of courtesy shows at least three key components: attitudes, such as a desire to please and to avoid offense; knowledge and understanding, such as competence to make a guest feel welcome and to disagree tactfully in a discussion; and the ability and skill to use proper language expressions and forms, in part fixed by conventions.

In Chapter 2 the essential courtesies were listed under three heads: listening attentively, giving and taking criticisms pleasantly, and behaving amiably in speaking and writing. This analysis is clearly inadequate as an indication of the wide variety and scope of work involved in training in courtesies. A complete listing is also quite impractical. Although there are certain general characteristics of courteous behavior that are common in many experiences, each one sets up its own particular requirements. It is desirable for the teacher to consider the specific kinds of courteous behavior for any given experience. For example, carrying on a conversation includes such matters as giving others a chance to talk, listening attentively, disagreeing tactfully, not interrupting, acting graciously when interrupted by another, and avoiding harmful gossip.<sup>7</sup> In letter writing important constituents of courtesy are using appropriate greeting and close, adapting content to the interests of others, answering letters promptly, and showing concern for others.<sup>8</sup>

**Situations and Processes.** Because training in courtesies is mainly training in many specific kinds of behavior peculiar to varied experiences, it is

<sup>7</sup> Trabue and others, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Paul McKee, *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, p. 59.

goals or objectives. The first point concerns the importance of selecting a suitable topic. Perhaps much of the irresponsiveness of children in language situations is due to a feeling of not having anything to say. This helplessness is commonly caused not by lack of worthy experiences but by failure to identify and recall phases of experience suitable for expression. The teacher needs to stimulate and encourage children and to provide help in selecting good subjects by revealing to them resources of which they are unaware. Suitable material is found in children's personal experiences in the home and community—play, trips, pets, and hobbies—and in the school in both curricular and extra-curricular endeavors. In these various activities there are incidents that have interesting, unusual phases which arouse in the child some mental or emotional response worthy of expression. It is the expression of such personal thought or feeling that has value and that adds the spice of interest. The teacher will need to probe for these reactions, recognize them, and encourage the children to express themselves freely. At times he will need to discourage the mere cataloguing of events and to train the children to avoid the trivial, the commonplace, and the sensational. In such work the teacher is training the children not merely to use language but also to observe closely, to be keenly sensitive to feel-



Fig 9-3. Classroom experiences stimulate conversation and discussion. (Courtesy of Hazel Lambert)

as those concerning what to say when introducing one's mother to the teacher or how to address a distinguished visitor. Because children's crudities are often due to ignorance, negative examples may profitably be studied in comparison with good examples. Examples of discourtesy can be cited from children's experience and observation, or a file of typical incidents may be built up by the teacher. Discussion should center on better forms of conduct. Children should not be embarrassed by having their own shortcomings critically analyzed before the class.

Another approach begins with hypothetical problems rather than with negative examples. How would you meet such situations as dealing with an annoying solicitor, greeting unexpected and unwanted guests, being interrupted in work by an overeager friend, and answering the telephone when you are planning to go out? Discussion of such problems of conduct can be supplemented at times by role playing, the children acting out the situation as realistically and vividly as possible.\*

The development of feelings of sensitivity and the desire to be pleasant, like other attitudes, must be approached and guided indirectly by suggestion and example. Prevailing patterns in the home and social circle have a vital influence; a teacher can do little about them directly. He can, however, suggest and exemplify desirable patterns in the classroom and school. In addition to noticing and approving the good behavior of the pupils, the teacher may drop pertinent hints from time to time by saying that people are generally friendly, and we do not knowingly offend our friends; that people do not like us when we are discourteous; and that discourtesy is not the best way of meeting discourtesy—"A soft answer turneth away wrath"

## CONTENT

Next in importance to attitudes and courtesies as a factor in a vital language program and a logical next step in its development is evaluation of content. The primary purpose of communication—the saying or writing of something important and interesting to another—needs to be recognized and stressed early. Content is fundamentally important in all language experiences, but its nature naturally varies with the experience. The teacher should help his pupils to distinguish the content peculiar to a particular experience or situation.

**Specific Objectives.** Certain general characteristics or qualities of content are identifiable and provide points of attack in the achievement of specific

\* Angela M. Broening and others, *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, p. 237.

the whole trip through Yellowstone Park but the incident of the bear getting into the parked car and stealing a loaf of sliced bread.

The favorable effect of a composition is enhanced by including interesting details and information necessary to complete and vivify the picture, story, or report.

In the primary grades the teacher frequently needs to help the children distinguish between the real and the make-believe. The temptation to make a good story better by fictional embellishments is quite common and is not limited to children. Both fiction and facts have a place, but they should not be confused. The teacher may well ask, "Did that really happen, or are you making it up?"

Subjected as they are to radio, TV, movies, and comics, children are frequently uncertain as to whether or not a story—even one of their own making—is true or simply *might* be true. The following combination of skill, imagination, and comics was written without assistance by an eight-year-old during a free period in school. When it was read to the group and someone asked, "Is it true?" the reply was, "Well, it *might* be." And who knows!

Nothing has been changed except the spelling.

#### WUMBO'S ADVENTURE

Once upon an African night, a strange glowing object raced across the sky. It went over some tall trees and disappeared. A band of natives saw the strange "thing."

The next morning they went out on a searching party to look for the "thing." They thought it was an evil god. They split up and went in different directions.

Now a certain man named Wumbo went one way. After a while he heard voices in a strange language he did not understand. He was so busy listening that he did not hear the man from Outer Space creep upon him.

Before Wumbo heard a sound, he was caught.

The Space Men took him to their Space Ship which looked like a giant turtle shell.

The Space Men looked like, to Wumbo, the most horrible things he had ever seen. They all had three square heads, five eyes, and their mouths looked like loud speakers.

Near the Space Ship the monsters had set up strange "Gadgets."

All of a sudden one of the monsters started jabbering in that strange language and pointing at an instrument. The instrument looked like a diamond with a half moon in it.

The other monsters looked at the instrument and made a rush for their Space Ship and then they took off and were never heard of again.

As for Wumbo, later in the day the other natives found him, untied him from the tree and all was well.

ings and moods, and to think clearly. Examples may serve to clarify this point.

Jean described a commonplace experience, but her use of the descriptive words *fat*, *gray*, and *jiffy* made this little story worthy of commendation:

#### ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL

One day as I was going to school I saw a fat gray squirrel. When I was coming home there was the same squirrel I had seen before. I ran home, got a nut and was back in a jiffy. When I gave it to him, he took it and ran away.

Robert's story, though containing only three sentences, seemed quite complete. It was written independently during a story-writing period by a quiet, slow, unimaginative boy.

#### THE MAGIC POOL

Once upon a time a girl and a boy were sitting by a pool. The boy said, "This is a magic pool. Look, I can see my face."

"I like Robert's use of the word *magic* to describe his pool," complimented the teacher. "Having the boy really say something helped to make the story interesting too."

Helen, age eight, also has undoubtedly drawn upon a real experience. She is seeing tadpoles in a brook or pool; but by adding an imaginative touch, she has given her story a charming quality. Helen's story has no name.

Once upon a time some baby tadpoles and fish were rolling little tiny stones to each other when their mothers called them to come in and go to bed. So they ran everyway. "Good night! Good night," they cried.

The teacher commented favorably: "I especially liked Helen's last sentence. Can you see the little tadpoles as they scurry quickly home?"

Partly because he chose an unusual theme, fourteen-year-old Alf's short poem rose above the commonplace:

Did you ever walk  
Along a street  
And gaze at  
Other people's feet?  
Listen to their  
Steady beat,  
While on your  
Way to school?

The possibility of making a successful composition or talk is increased by limiting the scope to a single incident or phase of an experience—not

#### MY OCCUPATION

When I grow up I am going to be an airplane pilot. When I am an airplane pilot I will have to use language in a manner that other people can understand me I will have to talk to the other pilot and get in contact with the ground. I will have to talk to the passengers I will have to talk with the flight instructor

#### THE SQUID

The squid belongs to the class Cephalopoda (the highest of mollusks).

It has ten tentacles, two of which are longer than the others and are used to catch its prey. The other tentacles transfer its victim to the beak for dinner.

The squids eyes are very well-developed.

Its body is tinted and spotted with changeable colors.

It can discharge an ink-like fluid to cover its movements while being chased by an enemy. Also from the same tube it discharges ink it can discharge to make it go backwards at a higher rate of speed.

The giant squid measures about fifty feet in length.

Flying squids leap across the water sometimes landing on ships.

**Occasions.** Opportunities to emphasize the importance of good content, to clarify understanding of what constitutes good content, and to train in specific abilities are offered in every experience in the language program—in fact, in all phases of the curricular and school-life program where language is used. Good language habits often result simply from general good teaching and good learning. But in spite of the many opportunities pupils have to use language effectively in real situations, teachers find that special attention needs to be given, in definite training lessons, to specific problems. The training lesson, however, should never be far removed from the particular language experience in which the need for the training is revealed.

**Processes.** The first step of procedure for a training lesson is to recognize a specific language need in some purposeful experience. This need is revealed by an evaluation of the children's work by both teacher and children; the need may be limited to a small group or may be common to the whole class.

A second step is to clarify the children's ideas of the desired quality. If the point at issue, for example, is selecting suitable topics, the teacher helps the children identify in their experience those aspects which have potential interest for a listener or reader and about which they have some knowledge and strong feeling. Children can suggest suitable topics for illustration and class discussion, or the teacher can present examples illustrating good qualities and weaknesses. Good topics should be interesting and definite rather than vague, vapid, and wordy. Titles are often used to suggest topics. Such a title as "Where I Went" or "What I Saw" is too broad. "An Experience

Originality and independence in thinking are desired qualities. The young storyteller is often inclined to follow the pattern of an approved classmate. In the latter grades the tendency to report undigested material verbatim also needs to be dealt with.

The teacher may well collect from his children's work and elsewhere compositions that illustrate good and bad points of content. The following are compositions from the fifth and sixth grades, illustrating content. How should they be rated? In what respects are they good or not so good? The first pair is on "Citizenship," and the second pair on "My Occupation." The fifth composition, on "The Squid," is more informative in type. The spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing are original.

#### CITIZENSHIP

A good citizen must not forget important things. We shouldn't run on the corridors, or carelessly throw balls and bats. When using a bat, we should be in front of a backstop only.

Try not to throw paper around, and if we find some on the playground let's pick it up. Our playground should be clean.

At noon remember to wash our hands. While in the cafeteria use our best manners, and don't talk loudly.

Fights cause us to get hurt. We might also lose our best friend. Therefore, we should try to stay out of them.

Don't run in our rooms. While in the bathroom be quite and sure the the water is off, when we're through using it. We shouldn't throw papers in the bathroom either.

#### CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship to many boys and girls doesn't mean much. Citizenship is really one of the most important duties in life. Everyone, including myself, should try to be a better citizen.

When I go out for recess I see good citizenship and some not so good. Some of us don't remember to throw the papers in the cans, but throw them on the floor.

On the playgrounds, sometimes boys start fights which don't get them anything but a black eye, bloody nose, or something like that. It is less painful to cooperate.

"Play Fairly at All Times," is a good rule.

#### MY OCCUPATION

When I grow up I am going to be a surgant-physician. I will need language very much.

In permoring an operation I must be able to speak clearly and correctly, if I made a mistake and got the wrong instrument, it would take time to get the right instrument, and operations must be done quickly.

As a physician I need to give prescriptions to people and give them advice on how to cure themselves.



Their food consisted mostly of corn, fish, and deer meat.

Their houses were made of very heavy wood, about 4 inches wide, and 9 feet high. The houses were covered with leather, and tied with a strip of leather at the top.

For transportation they used horses, canoes, and their feet.

For food the early Indians hunted. when they hunted they wear masks, and the women gathered nuts. Their homes wer made of tule, and they had a sweat house, they had the sweat house so they could get owt the gwims. another way to get food was to fish.

Training in organization is training in clear thinking. Smith says: <sup>10</sup>

In general, pupils in the elementary school give evidence of growth in power to think as they become increasingly able (1) to stick to the subject under discussion, (2) to relate events in the simple sequence of time, (3) to order ideas in relationship to a problem or a purpose, and (4) to interpret experience, generalize concerning it, or draw inferences from it. The processes are alike at all levels of development, but the problems will vary in complexity with the age and experience of the children. A recent science reader for pre-school children teaches the classification of animals and the characteristics of species by pictorial groups of four animals, one of which is out of place, as, for example, a fish swimming through the grass along side of a cow, a horse, and a sheep grazing there. Organization of ideas begins as simply as that in connection with the activities of the school day. Children in the kindergarten list the things they see during a walk around the block. They discover the list is easier to remember if they group what they have seen under the headings *trees, animals, flowers, and people*. Later they learn that certain kinds of food build muscles; others build bones; and still others furnish fat or energy. They make charts by pasting pictures of fruit, bread, milk, vegetables, or meat under the proper headings. This is the process of developing a sense of organization by grappling with ideas that demand ordering if learning is to take place.

**Specific Objectives.** Primarily important is sticking to the point, achieving unity. Selecting a suitable topic and limiting its scope to a single aspect of the topic make sticking to the point easier; there is only one point to stick to. A second feature of good organization is the presenting of material in an effective sequence. The sequence may involve cause and effect relations, a series of incidents or events in which there is a time factor, or directions to be followed in a prescribed order as in a recipe or game. Other basic *considerations are the beginning and ending sentences, especially in short compositions or talks.* The beginning sentence—the topic sentcoce—catches interest and frequently introduces the topic, question, or problem. The significance of the beginning and ending sentences is best

<sup>10</sup> Trabue and others, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

"I Wouldn't Want to Repeat" or "Why Pigs Have Tails" immediately arouses in the listener or reader a feeling of anticipation.

If the point at issue is expressing personal feelings and ideas, the teacher may well present for study samples from the children's work or from other sources. Compositions may be presented in pairs, good and bad, so that children can get a feeling for the personal quality desired.

The third step is to have the children prepare original examples embodying the particular quality under study, such as lists of topics that are personal, definite, and brief; a composition dealing with a limited topic or single experience, and a composition showing interesting details. These, of course, should be presented and considered by the class.

The fourth step or stage is to have the children prepare and deliver their talks or compositions, concentrating on a particular point.

In comparison with the wealth of explanatory material and exercises on the mechanical phases of writing, usage, and pronunciation, current textbooks offer little help to the teacher in setting up special training exercises in content and in organization. This is difficult to understand, in view of the general recognition of the primary importance of content and organization for good composition. There may be the implication that content and organization are adequately learned incidentally through speaking and writing, which is very doubtful; the omission may be due to oversight; or training exercises in content and organization may not be so easily fitted into conventional patterns as are exercises in capitalization, punctuation, and usage. Under the circumstances, the teacher is faced with the necessity of building up his own procedures and exercises when the need for them appears.

## ORGANIZATION

Organization and content are closely related. The primary concern in a study of content emphasizes choice of topics and material that are interesting to others. The primary concern in a consideration of organization stresses the presentation of the material in such a way as to make it clear and forceful.

The following compositions from the social studies, fourth grade, show good content. The first sample shows good organization; the second, poor organization.

The Indians didn't wear many clothes. The woman wore skirts made of bark, and they wore capes. The men wore pieces of animal skin tied around the waist.

books, will be helpful if the immediate contributory purpose of such exercises is recognized.

Miss Heffernan gives some concrete proposals for the teaching of paragraphing, some of which are applicable to other phases of organization:<sup>11</sup>

Dividing a composition into paragraphs should be taught when need for it has clearly arisen in the child's effort to put his ideas into written form. Obviously this will occur when the child needs to introduce a number of distinct topics as parts of a composition. Third grade:

#### SENDING MESSAGES QUICKLY

Many years ago the fastest way people had to send messages was to send them by runner. A runner could not run many miles a day. Only the rich people could afford to send runners.

Men had to think of a faster way to send messages. Someone realized that light and sound could travel faster than a runner or a rider of a fast horse. So men began to try to find ways to send messages by light and sound.

The teacher may analyze carefully selected paragraphs from the children's writings to help them to see how in each paragraph every sentence contributes something new to the same topic. . . .

Through hundreds of satisfying experiences in analyzing their own writings and the writings of children of their group, children grow in power to construct clear and effective paragraphs. . . .

As children progress in their ability to construct paragraphs in which every sentence contributes something fresh and interesting to the topic, they may be guided into a critical analysis of longer compositions. They may determine whether the first sentence of a paragraph introduces a new topic and whether each sentence contributes to the extension of that topic.

The problem of providing a smooth transition from one paragraph to the next necessitates considerable study of models and much systematic practice in writing.

Miss Heffernan suggests the use of exercises consisting of sentences of a paragraph presented out of their natural order and requiring rearrangement by the children and comparison with the original. The same procedure can then be applied to the proper arrangement of paragraphs within a composition. Miss Heffernan gives a final word of advice: "In the teaching of paragraphing, as in the teaching of all other specific language skills, one composition corrected and discussed with the pupil individually is worth a score of neatly corrected papers handed back for the pupil's own study."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 172-175.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

shown in concrete examples. Compare some of the following beginning sentences

Grade 1: This story is about a flying house.

Grade 2. Little Star was an Indian boy.

Grade 3. Here comes old Gray Turtle down the road—step! step! step!

Grade 3: It was sunset when Mother brought the clothes in and, as she stepped in the door, she heard a thump, thump, thump. Something was in the attic!

Grade 6: "There she goes!" exclaimed Jim Land as he watched the X-5 take off.

The good ending sentence brings the story or incident to a prompt close, holding interest to the last and providing a satisfactory conclusion or a neat turn.

Even young children may, with training, be made aware of these important elements in good story writing. The following story, written independently by a nine-year-old girl, has an interesting beginning and shows cause and effect relations. Events follow each other in natural sequence, and the story is satisfactorily concluded.

#### FLUFF

Fluff was two days old when Nancy found her in a basket near her mother. "Oh, what a cute little white kitty," said Nancy. "What shall we name her, Mother?"

"I don't know, Nancy," her Mother said. "Fluff might be a good name."

"Yes, Fluff would be a good name," so they named the little white kitty Fluff.

Day by day Fluff grew bigger and bigger. She grew into a big cat. You could tell she was happy by the merry twinkle in her green eyes.

Then, one day, Nancy forgot to feed her. Nancy grew crosser and crosser until, one day, Fluff could stand it no longer. She went to a better home where she lived happily ever after.

The writing of longer compositions introduces the necessity of paragraphing—the dividing of a theme into topical thought units. Here again the purpose is the achievement of logical clarity. Paragraphing requires maturity as well as study and experience, although a beginning can be made in the primary grades.

**Processes.** Organization concerns knowledge factors and can be handled by the direct procedures used in teaching content. The training lesson follows the same steps: purposeful occasion; models, possibly standards; individual performance followed by evaluation; practice, concentrating on specific difficulties; deliberate use; and estimation of progress. Illustrative material will be found very useful. Possibly more or less formal practice exercises in organization and sequence, provided in textbooks and work-

## Vocabulary and Sentences

Work on vocabulary and sentences may be approached from two points of view: mere correctness and clear, accurate, vivid expression. The first approach is largely a negative one, eliminating errors. The second approach goes directly to the heart of the effective use of language—clear thinking—in searching for words, phrases, and sentences that express ideas clearly and vividly and in changing correct but commonplace expressions into interesting ones. Traditional teaching has been concerned, and possibly satisfied, with mere correctness. Modern teaching faces and attempts to meet the challenge of the broader concept. A child's words and sentences may be substantially correct but still flat, dull, and inexact. Says Pooley: <sup>1</sup>

Language free from error is not necessarily good language. It becomes good as the child develops a feeling for the bright, sparkling word or phrase, the exact word for his needs, the sentence which says exactly what he wants to say as economically and clearly as possible. This feeling for the fitness of words in their uses is the positive side of usage instruction, the side to receive much more attention than has been given to it.

The positive approach is developed in this chapter. The negative approach, working for appropriateness or correctness, is made in the following chapter.

**Vocabulary Development of the Child.** The development of vocabulary in the early years of the child's life is a part of the process of growing up. From two or three words at one year of age, the vocabulary increases to nine hundred words at three years and to two thousand or more by the

<sup>1</sup> R. C. Pooley, *Teaching English Usage*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1946, p. 187. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

## EXERCISES

1. Observe a class in oral work and evaluate in terms of attitudes, courtesies, content, and organization. Note needs for further instruction.
2. Evaluate for content and organization several samples of children's written work.
3. Draw up sets of standards appropriate for content and for organization at a particular grade level.
4. List means for improving content, using this chapter and other sources such as courses of study and textbooks.
5. Plan a lesson for improving content.

## REFERENCES

- Broening, Angela M., and others: *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, chap. 14.
- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, chap. 9, pp. 15-16, 30-31.
- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, pp. 184-185.
- and Frieda H. Dingee: *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 27-28, 35, 58.
- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, pp. 56-59, 85-86, 99-105, 110-112, 124-125, 147-150, 170-171, 214, 312-316.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952; pp. 307-309, 398-400.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 229-235, 246-247.
- Developing Children's Power of Self-expression through Writing*, Board of Education, City of New York, 1952, chap. 2.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, pp. 37-42, 189-190.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*. Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 19-20, 39-40, 57-58, 60-62, 74-75, 103, 106, 119, 121, 171-175, 218-219, 227-228.

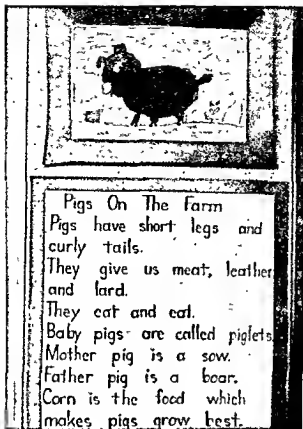


Fig 10-1. Observations on a trip to a farm are summarized in an experience chart, first grade (Courtesy of Hazel Lambert)

those verbal constructs necessary to understanding the world about him and to continuing use of language as a means to growth."<sup>3</sup>

"To proceed *from* experience *through* language *to* meaning is clearly to recognize the function of language in communication."<sup>4</sup>

To develop vocabulary is to train children to observe, to interpret experience, to discover nuances of feeling and mood, and to find words that

<sup>3</sup> M. R. Trabue and others, *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, p. 53. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

<sup>4</sup> R. G. Stauffer, "Trends in Language, Spelling, and Handwriting," *Elementary English*, December, 1951, 28:463.

time the child enters school. Rapid growth, usually thousand words per year, is characteristic of the first few years in school.<sup>2</sup> Nouns develop first, then verbs, adjectives, and other parts of speech. Vocabulary development is determined by the environment, patterns, and direct guidance of parents and by the child's native capacity to learn. These two factors operate to produce enormous individual differences. When the child enters school there is a well-stocked storehouse of experiences and words upon which the teacher can draw. The teacher's problem is to explore this background, to broaden and deepen experiences, and to provide new words and linguistic patterns with which to deal with them. Children delight in new words. The opportunities are challenging and rewarding.

Clues to handling vocabulary development in school are found by observing more closely how vocabulary develops in the young child. It will be found that words grow out of needs for meeting real life situations, and that vocabulary increases in range and complexity as experiences become rich and varied.

The close relation of vocabulary to experience is shown clearly in the language development of the child. The word *dada* comes to be associated with the man about the home and *mama* with the female person, who takes care of his needs. The word *car* is picked up as a means of referring to the family automobile and to a toy. *Wawa* is the means of expressing the idea *I want a drink*. In due time *all gone*, *bye-bye*, and *Tommy fall down* appear as means of thinking and expressing simple ideas. Words appear as a convenient medium for expression of thoughts and feelings, first expressed through inarticulate sounds and bodily movements. Language increases in complexity and exactness as the child's ideas and feelings are differentiated and more clearly defined in the process of maturing and adjusting to an increasingly complex social environment. The environment extends in time to include books, radio, and television, as well as people and things, but vicarious experience does not alter the close relation that naturally exists between ideas and words. Direct experience continues to be the chief source and means of vocabulary development. As a summation of the point, we may quote Smith: "It is obvious from these examples that it is *out of the materials of [direct] experience* that the child evolves meaning and concepts, attaching to them verbal symbols. From these he creates

<sup>2</sup> Dorothea McCarthy and others, *Factors That Influence Language Growth*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1953, p. 5. Also see David H. Russell and others, *Child Development and the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1953, p. 17.



direct observation of people, things, and processes provided by excursions and field trips and by the examination of objects, specimens, and models in the classroom. In an excursion to a house under construction, for example, the children observe materials, processes, and workmen; they make a list of terms identifying and summarizing what they see, such as *floor, joist, studding, window sash, pitch, rafters, cornice, insulation, air conditioning, floor plan, carpenter, plumber, architect, builder, pouring concrete, laying bricks, and bungalow*. In conversation, discussion, and the making of experience charts and diaries following excursions, the children clarify ideas through expression and acquire new words.

Observation in the classroom is no less productive of ideas and words. A live rabbit was housed in the classroom for several days preliminary to a nature-study lesson. The children fed the rabbit and watched it eat. In the discussion that followed the teacher pointed out that the rabbit lives naturally in a hole in the ground and asked the children to observe whether the rabbit is well adapted to such a home. They noticed the warm fur, the claws for digging, the food and water supply nearby, the protective coloration, etc. To describe a *Promethea* moth just hatched, children listed such terms as:

delicate	velvetylike	spotted
silent	soundless	fuzzy
dainty	dull reddish brown	cream markings
cloudlike	silver lines	lovely
colorful	soft	dotted
graceful	spidery body	fragile

Projects are not ends in themselves; they are defensible as a means for extending experience and clarifying thinking, processes which stimulate vocabulary development. Thus cooking, building a train, a store, an aquarium, a Navaho hogan, or making puppets to represent people in Mexico train the child in observation, stimulate research, clarify ideas, and extend vocabulary. In building a train, for example, the child will have occasion to use the terms *whistle, signal, smokestack, fender, brake, headlight, throttle, cab, track, boiler, switch, siding, flagman, railway crossing, all aboard, engineer, conductor, passengers, fireman, freight, sleeping car, steam, electric, coach, platform, station, depot, timetable, ticket, and travel*.<sup>3</sup>

Pictures provide a near-real type of experience, and they have the advantage of practicability when it is impossible to take children on field

<sup>3</sup> Dorothy L. Brown and Marguerite Butterfield, *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, p. 59.

express exactly what they think and feel. Ideas and feelings, initiated by perception or thought, progress from a vague, nebulous form to exact definition in the process of finding words to express them. The order is experience, interpretation, and finally words. Perhaps one should repeat the term *experience* at the end of the series to complete the cycle, inasmuch as words actually lead to further experience and enrich the original one. Vocabulary work throughout the school life of the child should continue to be a means of clarifying and expressing ideas and feelings. It should grow out of real, vivid experiences and the desire to put them into words.

These general statements may take on more meaning as we explore various possibilities for developing vocabulary in school, first in meaningful experiences in connection with the content areas of the curriculum, and then in language experiences and in special exercises.

**Meaningful Experiences.** If growth in vocabulary is to proceed naturally, as a correlate of experience, it is obvious that most of the growth will take place in those areas of the curriculum which offer opportunities for real, vital experiencing—in the content subjects of social studies and nature study. Particularly conducive to vocabulary development is the



Fig 10-2. Construction is a rich source of ideas and words. (Courtesy of Bakersfield, Calif., city schools)

times the meanings of familiar words of general and varied application are extended, as *bow*, used in greeting and as part of a ship. Sometimes children are led to examine their own experiences and to express meanings more precisely, as in the use of *nice*, *swell*, *good*.<sup>\*</sup>

**Vocabulary Development in Language Experiences.** All work in language experiences is necessarily training in vocabulary. In conversation and storytelling the teacher may suggest an appropriate word as the child hesitates. New, effective words and phrases are recognized and receive favorable comment; the achievement of a particularly well-turned phrase is sometimes greeted by the applause of the class. On occasion the teacher may make such comments as "How did the puppy sound when he *yelped*? Who can make a yelping sound? It isn't like a bark, is it? . . . What did the selfish pig do? Are we sometimes selfish? Can you say the word *self-ish*?"

A story by Clyde was well received because of the *sound* words—"He makes us hear that motorcycle," said the teacher.

#### THE NOISE

As I was standing in the street there was an awful roar. Put! Put! Crash! Crash! Boom! It sounded like a hurricane. But just as I was turning around the corner, down the street came a motorcycle.

Of the following story the teacher said, "Ann has used some very good *descriptive* words. Can you see Jack Frost's painting on her window?"

One crispy, sunny morning,  
When it was awful cold  
I woke up very suddenly  
And found that it had snowed.  
Jack Frost had painted pictures,  
Upon my window pane  
A garden full of sparkling flowers  
Which grew beside a lane.

Sometimes a child who has unusual creative ability cannot get his stories on paper because of mechanical difficulties. Here such a child, working with another child who could write and spell very well, produced the following story. It was well received by the class because of the expressive words that the two children had chosen. "Gee, that little mouse was scared."

#### FLUFFY

Fluffy was a big gray cat. One day she got in a pile of leaves. She jumped around and around until she was all tired out. It was a nice warm day and Fluffy curled up and went to sleep in the soft bed of leaves.

<sup>\*</sup> Trabue and others, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

trips or to bring objects into the classroom. In connection with a farm unit in the first grade, it is possible to secure class-size pictures showing buildings, animals, implements, fields, and some of the activities. Distant lands and people, industries, physical features, buildings, and technological developments can thus be brought into the classroom. Pictures are useful in nature study, by portraying flowers, birds, and animals; in music, by showing instruments; and in art. Of course, it is recognized that pictures do not take the place of firsthand experiences; indeed, the latter are the basis of getting meaning from pictures. Vocabulary development, however, is readily promoted by their use. Discussion of illustrations in children's books not only leads to greater appreciation but may add many new words to the vocabulary. Children should recognize the difference between photographs, pictures that are true to life, and purely imaginative illustrations. Such words as *depth*, *sunset*, *somber*, *bright*, and *distance* may be introduced. The remarks of even very young children during a frank discussion of illustrations might be extremely beneficial to some of the modern artists who feel that the more fantastic and confusing a picture is the better children will like it.

Third-grade children gathered around the teacher, examining storybooks which had not been read to them, described the pictures variously as:

shadowy	silly	funny
queer	peculiar	unusual
could be true	blurry	old-fashioned
gives real pleasure	looks far back	bright color
clear	dull	dim
attractive	not well colored	clouded
exciting	distinct	different

Reading material, particularly imaginative literature, suitable in content and vocabulary to the maturity of the children is a rich source of ideas and words. From reading, both oral and silent, the children get ideas and also words for expressing them. Noticing new words, particularly well-turned and beautiful expressions, adds to the enjoyment and understanding of literature and provides a limitless source of fresh ideas for use in various language experiences. This development is immediately utilized in the introductory phases of creative expression. It must be remembered that the value of incidental word study can be lost by formal, pedantic handling.

Meaningful experiences inevitably promote growth in vocabulary, but definite guidance in word study is necessary to secure maximum growth. Children can be led to an exactness and extension of the meanings of words which they could not achieve unaided. At times new words are observed and studied for exactness of meaning, appearing in a new context. Some-

Then the teacher wrote on the blackboard the following: "The fairy danced."

"That sentence doesn't say much, does it?" she remarked. "Can you use some of your words to give us a picture of the fairy dancing?" As words were supplied by the children they were written under the sentence until it looked like this:

The	fairy	danced
little		quickly
golden-haired		and skipped
little curly-haired		and skipped nimbly
tiny		and skipped about
wee		to and fro
rosy-cheeked		and glided
nimble little		merrily
excited		joyfully
white-gowned		and fluttered

Using different combinations of words, the children made up sentences to picture the real fairy dancing.

Some discussion now took place about the plot. What was the fairy going to do beside dance? What would be a big incident? "Let's make it exciting," pleaded a boy; and a little girl immediately said in a hushed voice, "Suddenly the Queen of Fairies called them all together and said, 'Three of our fairies are missing.'"

From this point the story progressed rapidly. When an owl was introduced a short pause was allowed to list words appropriate to describe an owl—his appearance, habits, etc. When it was decided that the owl would open the petals of a tulip, a picture of a tulip was brought by a child to prove just how the owl might do this, for although the story was make-believe, certain facts had to be true to nature. When the story was finally completed there was considerable satisfaction. Many illustrations were drawn, and these, along with copies of the story, went into the children's storybooks. Following is the story:

Twilight was at hand and the dainty little fairy folk were getting ready for their dance. Wee fairy ladies scurried to and fro putting on glossy bluebell gowns while little elfin men dressed themselves in golden, yellow tulip suits. At the toe of each pointed shoe was fastened a tiny silver bell which tinkled with every step.

Suddenly the Queen of Fairies called them all together and said, "Three of our fairies are missing! We must look for them at once!"

Quickly two little elves ran to call the fireflies. "Come! Come!" they cried. "We need your light."

Soon a little mouse crept softly through the leaves but the rustling sound awakened Fluffy. The little frightened mouse scampered away with Fluffy chasing after him. He ran for his house in the stump of an old tree where Fluffy couldn't reach him.

Then the mouse turned around and chuckled to himself while Fluffy angrily walked back to the pile of leaves.

In reporting, there is need for accuracy. Children should be sure of their facts, and they should express their ideas in their own words. When they use words that they do not understand, the children are advised to go back to the context or to refer to a dictionary.

In creative experiences there is need for vividness and beauty of expression as well as for accuracy. A group of eight- to nine-year-olds decided to write a story jointly. Beginning sentences were submitted by different children. The sentences were written on the board by the teacher. After some discussion, a vote was taken, and the following sentence was chosen: "Twilight was at hand and the dainty little fairy folk were getting ready for their dance."

Silence followed. Having chosen their sentence the children could now think of nothing to follow it. At last the child who had contributed the sentence added, "Wee fairy ladies went to and fro putting on bluebell gowns, while little men dressed themselves in yellow suits." This was written on the board and read by the teacher with emphasis on the word *went*. "Wouldn't *hurried* be a better word?" suggested a little girl, and immediately someone else said, "*Scurried* sounds faster"; all agreed. Then someone suggested *glossy* bluebell, and other children gave the little men *golden* yellow *tulip* suits. The third sentence came quickly, but then a lull followed. The fairies were dressed; now what?

The teacher suggested that, since the story was well started, the children might think about it until the next day. In the meantime she advised them to try to find some good words which would describe fairies, and she marked off a section of the board where they might list unusual words which they found or thought of.

In spare time during the rest of the day there was much quiet excitement as the children found fairy stories and poems in the library corner or in books brought from home at noon. Each child was anxious to find an appropriate word and write it on the board. By morning the list showed such words as *fluttered*, *flickered*, *gauzy*, *excitedly*, *quivering*, *gnome*, *sparkled*, *gasped*, *joyfully*, *pinful*, *elfin*, *genly*, *twinkled*, *firefly*, and *robe*. The words were read aloud and commented upon. There was a brief discussion about the use of descriptive words and the reasons for their use.

motioned to the firefly who was standing near, and they all flew away to the fairy castle.

**Special Training Lessons and Exercises.** As just shown, vocabulary growth takes place best in natural situations in which there is a thought or feeling requiring definition and expression. It is the task of the teacher to take advantage of the situations for definite guidance at the time they arise. The question remains, Can time be profitably devoted to lessons and exercises in word study apart from the immediate situations requiring purposeful expression? Such training lessons and exercises have figured prominently in the traditional language program in the form of preparation of word lists on given topics, dictionary exercises in defining words, completion exercises in filling blanks from given lists of words, preparation of lists of synonyms and antonyms, and the study of etymology. Such procedures require reevaluation. The position taken by Smith<sup>1</sup>—that work of this type can never “be a substitute for development in the classroom of a wealth of opportunities for exploring the world in which children live and for stimulating them to thought and discussion concerning it”—will be accepted by teachers as sound. The danger is that training lessons will be so artificial and so far removed from actual situations that they will make little permanent contribution to children’s thinking and expression. There are better ways of handling training lessons.

Although it may be treated in a separate period, the training lesson is one in which the purpose is to clarify and enlarge children’s ideas and use of words. It will grow out of an immediate, recognized need—for example, the need to substitute definite words for vague expressions in stories. The teacher may call attention to such omnibus words as *good, nice, cute, swell*. He will discourage the use of expressions like *a good time, a good day, and a good dinner*. When you say *a “good” day*, just what do you mean? The teacher may well solicit suggestions, supplement them, and write them on the board: *sunny, warm, bright, springlike, summery, brisk, windy, calm, balmy, quiet*.<sup>2</sup> Discussion is naturally followed by attempts to use the more vividly descriptive words in storytelling and in other language experiences.

An occasion may arise for helping children to express bare ideas more vividly. For example, a pupil may say, “The boy went down the street.” A clearer picture is developed if one states *how* the boy went down the street. Did he run, walk, stroll, skip, stumble, shuffle? What kind of boy was he—noisy, redheaded, big, frightened, happy, freckle-faced? By com-

<sup>1</sup> Trabue and others, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Brown and Butterfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.

In a twinkling, swarms of fairies and elves scattered through the thick woods, each with a sparkling firefly leading the way.

On, on they went past the Crystal Pool, past Friendly Gnome's house and beyond Giant Cricket's home, but still there was no sign of the missing fairies.

At last Peach Blossom, a tiny rosy-cheeked fairy, came to Mr. Owl's house. Gently she flew to the door and knocked.

The door opened and Old Mr. Owl said kindly, "Come in please. What do you want?"

"Three of our fairies are missing," answered Peach Blossom. "We've been searching since sundown but have found no sign of them. Will you help us?"

"Whoo-oo!" hooted the Owl as he nodded his wise old head. He cocked his head on one side, folded his wings across his breast, closed his big round eyes, and thought. Then, said he, "I hear a sound." Putting the tip of his wing up to his ear, he listened carefully. Peach Blossom held her breath.

For some time she patiently waited and then, at last, Mr. Owl rolled his big brown eyes, wrinkled his brow, and said solemnly, "I hear the sound of muffled cries in the distance. Fairies! that's what I hear—little fairies in distress."

Peach Blossom was terribly excited. Her wings quivered as she cried, "Where, oh, where are they?"

"I don't know exactly," replied Mr. Owl rubbing his chin thoughtfully, "but if we follow the sound we may discover them."

"Let us go," said Peach Blossom eagerly.

"Whoo-oo! Whoo-oo-o!" cried Mr. Owl as he swept into the air. Peach Blossom fluttered at his side while the firefly flickered close by.

Over the treetops they flew. Mr. Owl was in the lead now, his ears wide open to follow the sound. Plainer and plainer came the sound until Peach Blossom could hear it too.

Then Mr. Owl swooped low and circled over a garden shadowed by trees at the edge of the forest. Louder and louder grew the cries until Peach Blossom knew they were coming from right beneath her. She drifted slowly down beside a big, red tulip which drooped heavily.

"Help! Help! Let us out!" came the pitiful cry from the tulip.

"It is our fairies," cried Peach Blossom, excitedly looking up at Mr. Owl as he landed beside her. "They are in the tulip!"

"Help is here. Be patient," called Peach Blossom to the fairies in the tulip.

"We are suffocating!" gasped a weak voice.

Mr. Owl was thinking fast. With one stroke of his powerful wing he pulled the tulip lower and lower until it touched the ground. Gently he put one foot on the tulip and pressed lightly on the closed petals. A tiny hole appeared in the end of the tulip. Peach Blossom put her face to the hole and cried, "Come! Come out here."

Joyfully, one by one, the three fairies slipped out of the flower, and then, how they danced for joy.

Suddenly Peach Blossom looked at the horizon. "Quick," she cried, "the sun will soon be up. We must hurry to the Queen."

Politely the fairies thanked Mr. Owl who was drowsy and nodding by now.



Music: soft, rhythmic, sleepy, lullaby.  
 Squirrel: flurry, scampering, nimble, chattering.  
 Color: bright, brilliant, gay, dull, somber.

As another vocabulary-building exercise, the teacher may write on the board the names of animals, asking the children to write after each one the name of the young, as:

bear	cub	cat	_____
sheep	_____	frog	_____
dog	_____	chicken	_____
duck	_____		

In the same way sounds can be matched:

lions	roar	cows	_____
sheep	_____	crows	_____
elephants	_____	geese	_____
frogs	_____	hens	_____
ducks	_____	owls	_____

As a slight variation, the teacher may write:

<i>To provide shelter we build a</i>			
doghouse	for dogs	_____	for sheep
_____	for chickens	_____	for rabbits
_____	for pigs	_____	for fish

Or the teacher can write:

<i>We call a group of</i>		
cattle a herd		wolves a _____
sheep a _____		bees a _____
fish a _____		horses a _____

The children may be asked to give examples of favorite smells, providing appropriate descriptive words, as in the following:

#### *Smells We Like Best*

Maple sap boiling: sweet  
 Smell of violets: woodsy  
 Freshly broken pine needles: spicy  
 Steak frying: appetizing  
 Brownies baking: delicious

The following group poem shows the use of expressive *sound* words, in this case, *windy* words:

binning the proper words, we get a clear picture: *The ragged, freckle-faced boy scampered down the street.*

Instead of starting with a sentence, the teacher may begin with a bit of dramatic behavior. As part of a dramatization or as a special assignment a pupil may be asked, for example, to cross the room in some distinctive manner. How did she walk? The pupils may informally dramatize different ways of crossing the room; and the class can be asked to find appropriate words for describing them.

Making lists of words may be made significant by having the children prepare them with a particular purpose in mind—for use in a story or poem or for a social studies summary or report. In one project, before starting Hallowe'en stories, appropriate descriptive words were listed on the board and left there for reference. Two poems which resulted were given in chorus with a solo voice taking the part of the moon in the first one:

One spooky, Hallowe'en night  
Witches and goblins were out.  
Scary ghosts were in sight  
And shadowy owls flew about.

The moon peeped from a black cloud  
And winked at a pumpkin yellow,  
He laughed and laughed aloud  
And said, "You're a mighty fine fellow."

Dry leaves lay in a heap  
That rustled as children ran past  
From door to door for a treat  
Until they went home at last.

#### HALLOWE'EN SPOOKS

Look up at the sky  
And see the witch!  
Look at the tail  
Of the black cat twitch.  
Look at the goblin  
Flying around  
On this spooky  
Hallowe'en night!

Exercises in finding words that aptly describe a picture, selection, or poem may be used profitably to promote clear thinking as well as to develop vocabulary. Occasionally a teacher may write a word on the board and ask children to give words suggested by it:

Noise: bang, crash, shout.

Taste: sweet, delicious, spicy.

Feel of different kinds of cloth: cotton, velvet, wool, silk

Sights on a snowy morning; of a building going up

Taste of apple pie, rice pudding, hot dog, Jello

A group of eight-year-olds listed the following:

*Lovely Things We Know*

A deep red rose

The color of maple leaves in the fall

Soft, fluffy snow on the trees

An apple tree in full bloom

A pink peony

The brilliant colors of a Monarch butterfly

The color of a hummingbird

## SENTENCES

Preschool children have acquired not only an amazingly large stock of words but also a practical command of sentence forms. They express complete meanings and adapt various forms of expression to their purposes by pauses and inflections of the voice. At six years some children use every part of speech and every form of sentence. At eight years their spoken language reaches ninety per cent of maturity in sentence structure without benefit of grammar.<sup>9</sup> The basic patterns of expression are those set by persons in the social environment, chiefly by parents. Individual differences as well as class differences are marked. The habitual forms of expression that children bring to school may or may not be acceptable to the teacher. The teacher often faces difficulties of reeducation in the basic patterns of speech.

A functional program places primary emphasis on the sentence, inasmuch as the sentence is the unit of thought and expression. Improving sentences is a means of improving the quality of expression. Improvement of sentences, like improvement of vocabulary, is primarily the result of training in clear thinking. The emphasis is not on *How did you say it?* but on *What are you trying to say?* and *Did you say what you meant to say?* The direct attack on the form of the sentence, rather than on the meaning, is treating the symptoms rather than the cause of poor expression.<sup>10</sup>

The ability to handle sentences well results from the gradual maturing

<sup>9</sup> David H. Russell and others, *Child Development and the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1953.

<sup>10</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, *Commission on the English Curriculum, Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, p. 216.

## A WINDY NIGHT

The wind was howling through the trees.  
 It knocked down branches and blew off leaves.  
 It whistled and screeched all through the night,  
 And shook the windows with all its might.

"Autumn Trees," on the other hand, makes use of *sight* words:

## AUTUMN TREES

The trees outside our window  
 Are turning yellow and red,  
 And leaves are floating slowly down  
 To their winter bed.

Fifth and sixth grades sometimes like to make up riddles or tell ones they have heard. As a variation, the riddles may be written on small cards or pieces of drawing paper which the children will exchange, illustrate, and color. This procedure may be adapted for primary children as in the following:

It is long and pointed.  
 It is larger at one end than at the other.  
 It grows in the ground. We eat it.  
 Color it orange.

The study of synonyms and antonyms, exercises in the selection of best descriptive words, and exercises in substitution can be helpful when related to purposeful expression. This adaptation usually requires, of course, that the teacher select or prepare a list for a particular purpose rather than use exercises in textbooks and workbooks indiscriminately. Exercises in books are useful as models rather than complete lessons.

The study of etymology has some value in the later grades and for bright pupils in the intermediate grades.

The individual word box or notebook is used by teachers effectively from as low as the second grade until children are able to use the dictionary effectively.

Children can search for and list manufactured words, such as *Socony*, *Nucoa*, *Kodak*, *rayon*, *dacron*.

Similes can be studied, such as *restless as the sea*, *dark as the night*, *quiet as a mouse*, *hard as a rock*. Children enjoy finding new ways in which to convey the meanings of these timeworn expressions.

Multiple word meanings can be noted, as in *pitch*, *fall*, *clear*, *lean*.

Children can list words to describe sensory experiences:

Sounds of mother getting dinner; cleaning house  
 Smells in a bakeshop; in the woods after a rain

The teacher may help her pupils to develop sentence sense by pointing out that they use sentences in speaking when they show thought units by pauses and inflections; by calling attention in reading to sentences, capitals, and punctuation marks; by writing sentences on the board; by writing on the board a story composed and dictated by the class; and by listening to and interpreting each other's oral contributions.

If these means fail to serve the purpose, that is, if the children continue to use obscure sentence fragments in speaking or writing, the teacher may make a more determined attack on the difficulty. Obscure oral statements may be examined for clarification, or the faulty written work of children may be placed on the board for class correction. A more formal approach is to write a paragraph of undivided material on the board and allow the children to discover the convenience of sentence division and to gain insight into sentence structure. Still more formal is the use of textbook or workbook exercises in identifying phrases and sentences, changing phrases to sentences, and writing sentences from phrases. The value of formal exercises is determined by the pupils' recognition of the purpose of the corrective exercise and its relation to his own composition. Corrective work, of course, should be limited to those who need it.

In discussions and in exercises the word *sentence* is used as a convenience in referring to an idea, although a formal definition may not be attempted. Also, the ideas and possibly words *subject* and *verb* or *predicate* are useful as a means of labeling key ideas. Such conceptions and terminology may be acquired in the business of distinguishing phrases from sentences. Dramatization—acting out a sentence—may clarify the subject-verb relationship.

It is recognized that the standards of good usage in regard to sentence structure are changing. Good speakers and writers increasingly use phrases for sentences. Although this practice is acceptable and effective in the hands of mature writers, it is doubtful whether such a tendency should be encouraged in children. The mastery of the complete sentence should precede the more exacting substitution of phrases for sentences. However, the implication that children should always use complete sentences needs qualification. The emphasis should be on the expression of a complete thought, not on the construction. Good usage commonly varies with the situation.

A second difficulty that the children experience in expressing simple thoughts appears in the run-on sentence construction. This fault appears in the narrative type of composition in which the child relates a series of incidents or happenings. Examples are:

of ability to think and to organize and express ideas. The attack of the school strategically follows the natural stages of language development: (1) clear thinking and expressing single ideas, (2) thinking and expressing relationships between several ideas, and (3) giving emphasis to expression and adding interest through the use of a variety of sentences.

**Clear Thinking and Expressing Single Ideas.** It may be observed that the child of one year begins to express himself in single, complete ideas, first in gestures, grimaces, and sounds, and later in words. At first one word serves to express a complete idea, then phrases and finally simple complete sentences are used. It is in later preschool years and in the early grades that confusion in thinking and expressing single ideas seems to arise as a result of the multiplicity of ideas to be expressed. Then it appears necessary to take measures to develop what we commonly call *sentence sense*, the ability to recognize and to express a complete idea. The child may have the fault of (1) saying too little, in phrases that do not convey complete ideas, or (2) attempting to say too much, by combining unrelated ideas in a series of unrelated sentences joined by *and*, *then*, *so*, or commas.

Children also often attempt stories that are too mature for them. In trying to be grown up or to make a good story, they select a subject quite foreign to their understanding, with the result that the story is a muddle of phrases which may be clear to the writer but are meaningless to the audience. Susan, an imaginative child, wrote the following story during a period when all the children were writing independent stories:

Once upon a time there was a lovely lady who thought she wanted to be a mermaid so she went to the wicked dwarf man by mistake. At this time there was in the land a beautiful prince who knew and loved the lovely lady. The wicked dwarf may was trying to prevent the lovely lady from being a mermaid. But he finally did prevent it. But she did not care and she went and married the prince and they lived happily ever after the lovely lady was a princess.

It will be seen that she had had wide experience with reading and with listening to stories. To her the story was a good one, and she read it to the class expecting to be complimented. Instead the children looked mystified. "What's a mermaid?" "Why did she go to the dwarf?" "You said he prevented it and then you said she got married. I don't understand." The teacher was careful to compliment Susan on her grown-up words and phrases. "Susan has used a grown-up word, *prevent*, and I like her phrase, 'At this time there was in the land.' Did you notice her descriptive words like *wicked*, *lovely lady*, etc.? Could we help Susan rearrange two or three of her sentences so we could understand her story better?"

basis for advancement to the stage in which compound and complex sentences involving relationships between ideas are effectively handled. Educators formerly concentrated on the simple sentence in the primary grades and began work on the complex sentence in the intermediate grades. The tendency was to discourage the use of complex sentences by children of six to eight. While this practice is still sound for some children, it is recognized that many children in the primary grades use the complex sentence spontaneously and effectively. Thus a kindergarten child, explaining his Easter picture, said, "This is an Easter basket almost like the one I made yesterday, but it has more eggs in it." Enlightened practice places the emphasis on an individual rather than on a grade basis. The requirement of using simple sentences only hampers the free thinking and expression of many children; when individual children are ready to use complex sentences, they should be so encouraged and directed. The following sentence, given by an eight-year-old as a beginning for a group story, shows a maturity which certainly should not be bridled: "Very far away, in a land which you have probably never heard of, lived two children and their cruel stepmother."

A story, "The Old Woman and Her Geese," was written by two children working together. One child was extremely imaginative, while the other was good at the mechanics of writing. They have used unusual variety in sentence structure:

Once upon a time there was a crookedly old lady and her geese. She lived in a little red house upon a high hill. There were green shutters on the house and a tulip bed beside it. All around the yard there was a high white fence.

One sunny morning when the old lady had done her work, she came out of the house and found four white geese drinking out of the rain barrel.

As the geese flapped their wings to fly off the rain barrel, one big white goose slipped and fell into the water.

"Honk! Honk!" cried the goose loudly as he splashed around in the water.

Quickly the old woman hobbled over to the rain barrel, pulled the goose out and put him on the ground.

He flapped his wings and waddled off. "Next time I'll go to the pool to drink," he said to himself.

The use of complex sentences indicates a maturity of thinking and the ability to sense relationships between main and subordinate ideas, "the best single criterion of maturity in expression," according to Smith. "Hence," Smith continues, "the most fruitful attack upon the problem is to develop in the classroom the kind of mental activity which will necessitate grappling

1. When he woke up, he saw a whale and it was looking at him so he swam as fast as he could and the whale started after him then Hector hid behind a rock and then he saw his mother and they lived happily ever after.

2. His father stopped the car and got out and went to the other car and three men got out and hit him on the head.

3. After we went on more rides we went to another place where they had little cars and there was a car that had police on it it was painted black and white.

Children seem to have difficulty in keeping ideas distinct. The attempt to meet the difficulty by limiting the number of sentences (as formerly advocated) hampers thinking and makes children sentence-conscious rather than thought-conscious. The admonition not to use so many *ands* leads to the conviction that *and* is a bad word and should never be used. A sounder but more difficult approach is to lead children to discriminate between ideas that form a close continuity and those that do not. In contrast to the misuse of *ands* in the examples above, Brown and Butterfield cite a little story written by Arthur:<sup>11</sup>

My cat follows me upstairs and downstairs and when I go to bed he comes too

The comment:

A teacher in correcting this might ask Arthur to omit one of the *ands* and to divide the material into two sentences. However, it seems that such a change is not only unnecessary but would also make commonplace a story that in its original form has something of art within it. As the sentence flows along, we visualize the cat as it tags Arthur upstairs and downstairs and going to bed at night.

The teacher may ask the children whether the incidents happened close together, and he may suggest other connectives when appropriate, such as *if*, *when*, *for*, *which*, and *because*. For gross violations the teacher may write the children's compositions on the board and invite class criticism and corrections with the emphasis on clarity of meaning. Proofreading exercises in textbooks and workbooks may have value when a child recognizes his difficulty and sees the purpose of the exercises.

The mastery of the sentence idea is a gradual growth and is not achieved in any one grade. It presents a persistent and recurrent problem for both teacher and student throughout the grades and even into college—a problem whose solution requires patience and individual work.

**Thinking and Expressing Relationships between Ideas.** The development of the single-sentence sense logically precedes and forms a necessary

<sup>11</sup> Brown and Butterfield, *op. cit.*, p. 27.



Individual, group, or class analysis offers the most effective instructional approach. Possibly formal exercises in textbooks and workbooks may help when used as indicated above.

**Giving Emphasis and Interest through Variety.** Variation of sentence structure is used in order to gain emphasis and interest. When the basic mechanics of expression have been mastered, attention can be given to finer distinctions of meaning and form. This type of work is characteristic of the mature pupil-writer in the upper grades and possibly in the lower grades where freedom of expression is encouraged.

The following story, written independently during a story-writing period in school, shows unusual maturity of plot and structure. The boy, an eight-year-old, was a great reader. The story is reproduced here exactly as written by the child:

#### hans and his surprise

once in a little green house in Sweden there lived a little boy by the name of hans. Now hans mother had a good many sheep and hans had to watch them every day, he would sit on the hillside with his staff and rod for hans lived in the 17th Century. And every night he would sit in the most comfortable chair and read. He had just a few books but he new them very well and loved them all by heart.

now, I am sorry to say that hans took ill one morning and he could not tend the sheep so his mother thought and thought and at last she found an idea. she went down stairs picked up her worn shawl and went scurrying out the door she took all the sheep and started down the street toward the town yelling sheep for sale sheep for sale. she got into the town and kept on yelling sheep for sale sheep for sale

the people of the town crowded around her and at last she got the last sheep sold she walked into the pet shop and said holding out her money I would like 8 kittens and mind you there baby kittens the storekeeper gave her the furry kittens and she went home yelling kittens for sale.

Again the people of the town crowded around and after she sold all the kittens but one she went home. she gave hans the kitten that was left. the mother took the money from the kittens and they lived happily after that.

The most effective work will be done in connection with the creative effort of the children in whom there is a keen desire and immediate motivation for effective expression. Much of the work will be necessarily individual, but problems of expression relating to emphasis or clarity may arise that are interesting to a group or even to a whole class. The problem may be presented orally by the teacher or often written on the board for close study. The children should experience the thrill of discovering better ways of expressing an idea.

with ideas and expressing relationships between them rather than merely to assist the child in defining and recognizing complex sentences."<sup>12</sup>

The occurrence of the *and* difficulty reappears at this point, as in the example from a weak sixth-grade pupil given by Smith:<sup>13</sup>

"We went to the plant *and* we met a kind gentleman *and* he told us all about the products used there." The concise thinker would express the same experience by saying, "When we went to the plant, we met a kind gentleman who told us all about the products used there." His superiority lies in the fact not that he has eliminated *and* but that he has seen the relationship among the ideas.

A basic problem in the mastery of complex sentences in the expression of ideas is choosing the proper connectives for indicating relationships. Connectives serve as guideposts for the direction of thinking. Examples may be discussed with the children to illustrate changes in meaning with different connectives: Mother says you may go out to play *when* you have wiped the dishes, *if* you return promptly at five o'clock, *because* you have finished your work, etc. Training in connectives has more value than the stating of grammatical rules and definitions and has more vital influence on habits of expression. Specific types of difficulty with connectives are listed by Smith, summarizing the results of many studies:<sup>14</sup>

All studies indicate that sentences involving *time* relationships are easiest for children to master, especially those beginning with *when*. Such differentiating time-words as *after*, *as*, *until*, *before*, and *while* come with increasing maturity. Sentences containing noun clauses commonly used as objects cause little trouble, probably because they follow the normal sentence order of subject, verb, and object, and therefore make less demand upon sustained thinking. Clauses of cause, condition, and concession appear late because they involve relationships necessitating logical thinking of a more difficult type. Frogner's study indicates that noun clauses, being a part of the subject-verb-object structure of the sentence, are practically never written as fragments. Adjective clauses seldom are. The adverbial clause, however, presents a real problem, being written as a fragment six times as often as the adjective and thirty-nine times as often as the noun clause. Emphasis upon the relationship in thought illustrated by the sentence, "Yes, you may go to the movies if—after—although," and the like, becomes particularly pertinent at this point. As the pupil grows in power to subordinate ideas and build up modifiers, the problem of sentence sense becomes more acute.

<sup>12</sup> M. R. Trabue and others, *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 68-69.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

- tieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp. 265-267, 307-313.
- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, pp. 89, 107-108, 302-312.
- National Council of Teachers of English, *Commission on the English Curriculum: Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 31, 53, 211, 214, 216, 247-248.
- Smith, Nila B.: *Areas of Research Interest in the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1952, pp. 7-11.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *Guide for Teaching English Is Our Language, Grades 1-2*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1950, chap. 8.
- : *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, chap. 10.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 52-55, 65-67, 127-128, 144-146, 149-153.

At times specific exercises, arising preferably in some individual child's problem of expression, may be given. One profitable exercise is practice in changing sentence beginnings—by inversion of clauses, for example—to emphasize important ideas. Such a sentence as, "The Indian boy took a nap while the dog watched the thief," may be studied for variety of expression. Another profitable exercise is practice in combining choppy sentences. The teacher may put on the board a group of such sentences and have the children combine them. Training of this type, arising because of an immediate need, may be very valuable. Textbooks and workbooks may provide exercises for timely use.

### EXERCISES

1. Make an original list of words that might be used to extend vocabulary in connection with a unit of work in the social studies or some other experience unit, preferably one under way.
2. Plan a training lesson in vocabulary, growing out of a specific need and consistent with the principles developed in the chapter.
3. Make a list of the sentence difficulties of a particular class from observation or study of written compositions.
4. Plan a series of lessons or experiences designed to remove one of the sentence difficulties listed in (3).

### REFERENCES

- Applegate, Mauree: *Helping Children Write*, Row, Peterson & Company, Evanston, Ill., 1954, chap. 7.
- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, chaps. 3-4.
- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, pp. 109-112.
- : *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, chap. 8.
- and Frieda H. Dungee: *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 34-35.
- and Marian Zollinger: *Guiding Language Learning*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chap. 9.
- Developing Children's Power of Self-expression through Writing*, Board of Education, City of New York, 1952, chap. 3.
- Herrick, Virgil E., and Leland B. Jacobs: *Children and the Language Arts*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955, chap. 14.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twen-

This information, supplemented by the observation of children and by the study of the local course of study and textbook, should be useful to the teacher in determining relative importance of usage difficulties.

Observation shows clearly the persistence of crudities through the grades. The teacher should understand that acceptability of expression is a gradual growth, individual in character, extending over a period of years and not achieved in any one grade; and that the habits of expression reflect the social environment of the children, the language used at home and in the community. The teacher faces at times the problem of changing deeply rooted habits of unacceptable expression and of overcoming indifference and even social prejudice against change. It is a difficult problem.

**Conditions Favorable to Acceptable Expression: Motivation.** What can the teacher do to facilitate the habits of acceptable expression? He may make a beginning, at least, by establishing conditions in the classroom that are favorable to good expression. As a bare minimum, he can set an example of clear, vigorous, acceptable English, providing at least one social situation in which acceptable language is heard. He may go further and show that he expects the children to use some care in the choice of words by insisting on reasonable acceptability and by expressing approval at favorable times. He may make good language the fashion through skillful motivation.

Primary motivation comes through experiences. Hatfield says, "The positive approach through worth-while activities which are interesting in themselves will do more to break down the customary attitude of passive resistance than any amount of specific drill, no matter how badly needed."<sup>1</sup> Language habits, like other habits, serve in helping people attain recognizable goals. The great drive for improving language from infancy on is to make oneself understood by others—to express needs, to give information, to persuade. Children of school age especially desire approval by the group, and acceptable language is one means of winning approval. The teacher should lead children to the willing acceptance of good standards and provide practice which makes the use of good language natural and easy.

Further motivation for acceptability is provided by many other phases of a thoroughly sound language program, such as the very important phase of setting up clearly defined, individual goals so that specific needs may be established and progress noted.<sup>2</sup>

## Usage and Grammar

Usage should be considered in relation to other factors contributing to performance in language, and should take its proper place in the hierarchy of attitudes, abilities, and skills. It is certainly not the chief end of language instruction; far more important are willingness to participate, content, and adherence to the point. Work on usage should contribute to the development of more important abilities as well as to total performance. If properly handled it will do so. In fact, the more fundamental language attitudes and abilities will provide motivation and set the stage for work on acceptable usage.

As background for this chapter's consideration of the problems and procedures of teaching usage, it may be well to review briefly related material in other sections of the book. In Chapter 2 certain principles concerning the place of usage in the curriculum were developed. As a basic assumption, it was observed that the English language is changing, that some traditionally objectionable forms of expression are now accepted, and that the general trend is toward a direct, vigorous, idiomatic form of expression. However, there are certain forms that are recognized as crudities, and they are objectionable. Excess use of crudities should be attacked vigorously and consistently. It was recognized in Chapter 2 that standards of acceptability vary in communities and that it is unwise for the teacher to set his sights too far above the general level in a particular community and social group. A third principle stated that different types of speech suit different situations, and that the teacher and the children must recognize these situations and the kinds of language appropriate to them.

Chapter 17 provides grade lists and suggestions for a sequence of work.

guage experiences. Acceptable forms of expression must be repeated sufficiently to cause the acceptable forms to *sound right*. All phases of the oral program make a contribution here—both experiences and training lessons. Practice exercises, if written, should be read aloud, and an abundance of oral practice in using acceptable forms must be given.

**Setting Reasonable Goals.** Definite, reasonable goals should be set for a particular class. A feeling of futility may occur in the pupils if the teacher goes to either of two extremes: neglects to set any definite goals or scatters effort among all the mistakes made by the pupils of the class. A few crudities should be listed for attention: those which are made by a number of pupils, those which represent recognized crudities of expression in a particular social group, and those which fit into the total program as outlined in the course of study or textbook. Priority should be given to basic crudities attacked, but not eliminated, in earlier grades.

Pooley lists the following errors to be attacked and eliminated in the elementary school: \*

<i>ain't</i> , or <i>hain't</i>	<i>was froze</i>	<i>have saw</i>
<i>hair are</i>	<i>he give</i>	<i>I says</i>
<i>a orange</i>	<i>I got for I've got</i>	<i>he seen</i>
<i>have ate</i>	<i>my brother, he (and other</i>	<i>them books</i>
<i>he begun</i>	<i>double subjects)</i>	<i>themselves</i>
<i>was broke</i>	<i>her, him and me went</i>	<i>this here</i>
<i>he brung</i>	<i>hissself</i>	<i>that there</i>
<i>climb (short i)</i>	<i>there is, was four</i>	<i>us boys went</i>
<i>clumb</i>	<i>knowed; growed, etc.</i>	<i>we, you, they was</i>
<i>he come</i>	<i>learn me a song</i>	<i>with we girls</i>
<i>have did</i>	<i>leave me go</i>	<i>have went</i>
<i>he, she, it don't</i>	<i>me and Mary went</i>	<i>have wrote</i>
<i>I drunk</i>	<i>haven't no, haven't nothing</i>	<i>it is yourn, hern, ourn,</i>
<i>didn't, hadn't ought</i>	<i>he run</i>	<i>theirn</i>

The list below contains items which, according to Pooley, should receive no time in class instruction. Many of them are acceptable in colloquial English; individual children of superior ability may be encouraged to substitute more formal constructions.\*

None of us *are*, were there.  
Can I go?  
Do the work *good*.

I haven't *got* a pencil.  
I couldn't *hardly* do the work.  
I haven't *hardly* any.

\* R. C. Pooley, *Teaching English Usage*, Appleton Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1946, p. 180. Quoted with special permission of the publisher. See also Hatfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-249.

\* Pooley, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

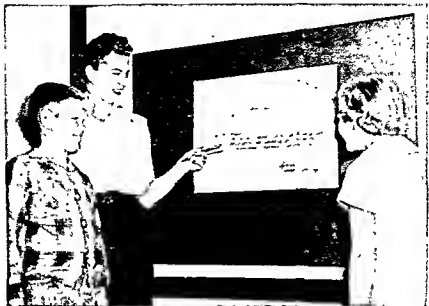


Fig. 11-1. "The teacher pointed out a mistake to Tom and me." (Courtesy of Tidyman Studios)

the practice periods should be short, intensive, and frequent. The fifth principle is that the teacher should determine, if possible, the cause of the mistake and make a clear explanation of cause suited to the maturity of the learner. Smith points out, for example, that difficulties with the use of the pronoun occur chiefly in compounds. The child will say correctly, "My mother read me a story," but will say incorrectly, "My mother read John and I a story." The correct form may be pointed out by suggesting that the child recall what he would say when speaking of himself alone. Another example is found in difficulties in agreement between subjects and verbs. The child learns early in the study of nouns that the plural is commonly formed by adding *s* to the singular, but he fails to observe that the opposite is true of verbs—we sing, not we sings.<sup>11</sup>

To be effective, instruction must be brought down to the level of individual needs, though not necessarily individual instruction. The preliminary inventory of needs, suggested above, provides a point of departure. Those common to the whole class can be profitably taken up with the class. It is likely, however, that for the most part needs will vary considerably with individuals. The teacher, then, may take one of two courses: He may

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 85-86.



served. The incidental correction of crudities is especially useful in the lower grades, where the use of more direct method of attack is limited.

Pooley feels that at the high school level, the practice of never interrupting children is responsible for much laxity in expression, and that this practice should be critically examined and qualified. He says, "The time to spare the child's feelings is *when he is the center of attention before a group.*"\* In informal types of language work, such as conversation, ordinary discussion, and informal recitation, the pupil should be stopped at once when he has made a serious mistake. The pupil may be required to repeat his statement in proper form. The practice of permitting no serious mistake to go unchallenged "will do much to raise the level of expression of a class." A related principle is that the corrections should be made by the teacher, for two reasons: the class should center attention on the more important phases of content and organization, and children do not have the discrimination required for proper evaluation of crudities. Much will be gained also by allowing high school pupils to make group decisions and to work out answers to problems of usage for themselves.

**Use of Training Lessons and Exercises.** Training lessons and exercises provide a direct means of attack on a difficulty; they take the form of oral or written instruction and practice or drill. Much work of this type has been futile in the past; and it will probably continue to be futile, unless the teacher observes faithfully certain basic principles. Primarily important is the child's understanding of just what is to be learned and the purpose of learning it. The child must see some connection between a blank-filling exercise and his speech habits. For a child who wants to improve, practice is natural and acceptable. But the purpose must be immediate and real.<sup>9</sup> The first essential of training lessons is that they should be an outgrowth of a purposeful experience which reveals need for a particular skill. This recognition of specific need plus the desire to improve motivates and sets the stage for the training exercise.

A second principle is that correct and incorrect forms should be presented together, properly labeled to show *right* and *wrong*. The child should make a choice in terms of some guiding rule developed or stated by the teacher. The choice of form becomes a problem of expression.<sup>10</sup> The third principle, already stated, is that much oral work should be provided so that the correct form will *sound right*. The fourth principle is that

\* Pooley, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-230.

<sup>9</sup> See Pooley, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-197, 229-230, Hatfield, *op. cit.*, p. 224; Dorothy L. Brown and Marguerite Butterfield, *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, p. 88.

<sup>10</sup> Trabue and others, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

treat each child as an individual learner, or he may group children with similar needs. The latter offers the advantage of simplification of instruction without sacrificing the individual. The teacher can teach several groups; he cannot teach thirty or forty pupils on an individual basis. The grouping is temporary and has a specific purpose: overcoming a specific language difficulty. An individual plan of work is useful as a supplementary procedure, adaptable to the extreme variants found in all classes and particularly in the small school.<sup>12</sup>

The cycle of learning experience in developing a single skill, whether class, group, or individual, includes (1) discovery of need, (2) recognition of the proper form, (3) practice, and (4) use in context, preferably in original material. The first two phases imply the necessity for positive instruction; the pupil cannot be allowed to attack his remedial work blindly. It is reasonable that the necessary instruction must be handled by the teacher, who directs it to a specific problem. Printed materials—textbooks and workbooks—help, but they cannot displace a competent teacher. The third phase and part of the fourth can be handled as seatwork exercises, carried on individually under the general supervision of the teacher. The contextual part of the fourth phase involves using a particular skill in free writing, a follow-up experience.

Specific training experiences take a considerable variety of forms adapted to particular grade levels. At the first-grade level the children may engage in exercises such as substituting an acceptable for an unacceptable expression. For example, in a show-and-tell period a child may say, "I brang this toy." Immediately, or in a training lesson in a language period, the teacher may give the acceptable expression and have the children use it in reporting what they brought. Similarly, the correct use of *throw* may be taught in connection with a beanbag game.<sup>13</sup> This type of exercise, providing practice in needed language forms in more or less interesting but isolated situations, is suggestive of the old, widely used language game. It provides opportunity to hear and to practice proper forms, but its value is lessened by its separation from experiences and the failure on the part of the pupil to comprehend the purpose of the exercise. Some primary teachers insist that their children are mature enough to be made aware of immediate language goals and to share in the responsibility of meeting them.

A more direct line of attack, increasingly valuable throughout the grades, is to take a particular language difficulty from the children's oral or written

<sup>12</sup> Pooley, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

<sup>13</sup> Jess S. Hudson and others, *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, p. 308.

work, write it on the board, and present it to the children as a problem of expression. The nature of the difficulty should be noted, the acceptable form contrasted with the unacceptable, and some practice immediately given in a variety of sentences. Group or class correction exercises of this type are profitably followed by having each child improve his own work.

**Use of Materials.** Formal types of exercises are provided abundantly in textbooks and workbooks. Teachers may also compose their own exercises, including blank filling and multiple choice, error recognition and correction, crossing out incorrect forms, question-and-answer exercises, original sentences, short talks and essays featuring correct usage, and games.<sup>14</sup> The best kind of exercise involves choice of construction.<sup>15</sup> The convenience of making assignments in work of this type leads to its overuse as a form of busywork; but in spite of this abuse, formal exercises may have some value when the purpose is clearly conceived by the pupil, when immediate need is recognized, and when practice is preceded by a well-handled preparatory period of instruction.

Suppose, for example, that a pupil, group, or class is having trouble with the use of *we* and *us* in such expressions as *we boys* and *us boys*. A recent textbook contains a section dealing with the difficulty. It explains that both forms are correct at certain times but are sometimes confused. It lists some examples of correct form: "We are going, . . . Some of us are going, . . . We boys are going, . . . They invited some of us boys"; and then provides a series of sentences in which the correct form is to be selected: "The camp counselor met (we, us) at the station, . . . Four of (we, us) boys made the team."<sup>16</sup>

The use of workbooks and seatwork is not too dependable as a means of bringing about improvement in usage. The selection of material may not be appropriate to the needs of a class; explanations and rules may be beyond the comprehension of the children; and the important difficulties of a particular class may not receive sufficient emphasis. Practice work, unless closely supervised, may result in the continued use of unacceptable forms; and practice is likely to be silent and detached from real communication. Usage practice, to be effective, should be spoken and heard.<sup>17</sup>

These criticisms may be taken to suggest a discriminating use of text-

<sup>14</sup> Mildred A. Dawson and Frieda H. Dingee, *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, p. 64.

<sup>15</sup> H. B. Reed, *Psychology of Elementary School Subjects*, Ginn & Company, Boston, 1938, p. 157.

<sup>16</sup> Lou La Brant and others: *Your Language, Book 1*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1956, pp. 390-392.

<sup>17</sup> Pooley, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-184. See also pp. 201-202.

book and workbook material rather than to recommend the complete abandonment of such material. Proper instructional materials that meet the requirements set up by Pooley may be an aid to the teacher, especially in the handling of problems of extreme variability. Instructional aids explaining difficulties and showing acceptable and unacceptable forms supplement the oral instruction of the teachers. Diagnostic tests and practice exercises can be used effectively if there is a recognized purpose in the mind of the learner. The value of the materials depends in large part on the way in which they are used. The indiscriminate assignment of lessons to whole classes and progression through the book page by page are not the best ways to use the material. If the teacher uses a group or an individual plan in remedial work, recognized as inescapable, it is helpful to inventory the contents of workbooks and textbooks according to type of language difficulty treated. An index of available material in textbooks, workbooks, and supplementary books can be provided for the use of children in the intermediate and upper grades without too much difficulty. Materials in the form of exercises on key difficulties may be selected from several sources, reproduced or mounted on paper, provided with answer keys, and housed so that they can be secured by the children without the help of the teacher. This equipment is useful in group work and practically mandatory in individual types of instruction.

**Keeping Records.** A final essential feature of the training program in usage is provision for recording individual goals and progress. Each child may keep a list of the usage goals, such as the teacher keeps for the whole class. Possibly a master list, constituting a single page in the language or general goal book, can be duplicated and distributed to the children. Each pupil should make a record of his language difficulties on this sheet early in the term. As specific difficulties are mastered, that is, as acceptable forms are used regularly in free speaking and writing, the pupil should record progress by checks on the goal sheet. This tangible evidence is a proper and powerful incentive for improvement.

## GRAMMAR

**Relation of Usage to Grammar.** In the everyday language of the community and school the terms *usage* and *grammar* are made synonymous. However, usage properly refers to habitual forms of expression—the language one actually uses. Grammar, on the other hand, properly refers to the structure and the science of language—classes of words, their inflections, their relationships to each other singly, in phrases and in clauses,

and the functions of these in the sentence. In the sentence *Mary lost her book*, one may use the word *lost* correctly without knowing the large class of words to which it belongs and without being able to state exactly its relation to other words in the sentence. On the other hand, one may be able to state definitions and rules without being able to apply them to words in a sentence, even in the correction of errors. The relation of grammar to usage is the crux of the matter.

**Place of Grammar.** The primary emphasis in language teaching today is on usage, but grammar still requires consideration. Investigations have failed to present proof of the value of grammar as a means of improving expression, yet authorities believe that there should be some kind of grammar somewhere in the program. The fact that there is little agreement on kind and place somewhat weakens the argument.

In Chapter 2 an attempt was made to clarify thinking about the function of grammar by suggesting two points of view prevailing in the past and in the present—formal and functional. Few now advocate a purely formal program, even for the later grades. Present opinion favors a functional approach.<sup>18</sup>

**Type of Grammar.** The content of functional grammar is obviously related to the purpose or value that it is assumed to have. Functional grammar in the traditional sense is derived from a study of errors in usage, and includes training in those definitions and principles that may assist pupils in the correction of errors. A broader concept of functional grammar makes a positive rather than a negative approach; the emphasis is on effective expression rather than correction of errors. In the process of grasping thought and building sentences and paragraphs to express ideas adequately, the children discover classes of words, notice changes in meaning with changes in form, learn the proper placement of modifiers and the skillful use of phrases and clauses, and learn how meaning is affected by change in the position of various parts of a sentence. The children learn appropriate terms for labeling the ideas with which they deal, and make generalizations to describe observed changes in words and to express relationships which they discover. The concepts and generalizations gradually crystallize into a body of conceptions regarding language which in themselves give a certain degree of satisfaction and which are useful in comprehension of thought and in expression of ideas. The emphasis is on thinking and relating ideas, understanding the structure of language, gaining clarity and force of expression through choice of words and manipulation of sentence elements in a variety of forms, and avoiding common mistakes.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 284-288.

It will be observed that acceptable usage appears as a part of the broader functional grammar program, but it does not dominate the program. As pointed out by Pooley, teaching of grammar should free the child for creative expression, not hamper him; show what to do and how to do it, not emphasize the negative. Grammar should expedite communication.<sup>19</sup> At another point, in relation to the teaching of grammar in the high school, Pooley states, "Grammar supports usage at the point when the child can grasp a generalization and apply it accurately to particulars."<sup>20</sup>

**Content of Grammar.** Some basic principles and concepts, as related to clear thinking and clear expression, can be noted. Fundamental, of course, is the understanding of completeness in the expression of a single idea, the sentence idea. Clear thinking and clear expression proceed in a sequence. Obscuration of thought is noticed frequently when sentences lack subjects or predicates and are merely fragments. Confusion is found when several ideas not closely related are connected by *and*, *so*, *then* and frequently become run-on sentences. Reconstruction of a sentence involves rethinking. The word *sentence* is found useful in discussion as a label for the expression of a complete idea, and its real meaning is learned through use. In time it is found that a talk may be tiresome and a composition may be boring if composed entirely of simple sentences—merely subject, predicate, complement. Variety of sentences adds interest. Children in the lower grades find that simple sentences fail to satisfy them, and they are ready to experiment with more complex and mature forms, combining closely related ideas with *ands*, putting together compound sentences, and varying sentence forms to show relationships among ideas.

The principles of modification and subordination are recognized as means of gaining clarity and vividness. They appear in sentences as various connectives are used: in the form of adjectives, using words that add detail and vividness when describing persons and things; and as adverbs when adding to the meaning of verbs and adjectives.

For example, the sentence *John fell down and dropped the ball* expresses very simply the action at a crucial point in a baseball game. Vividness is added by recasting the sentence, telling more about John and reporting how it happened that John dropped the ball. Thus, *John was the most eager and capable player on the team, but the ball slipped out of his glove when he stumbled over a stone*. Instead of using a sentence to describe John, one could use single adjectives: *reliable, dependable, sure-*

<sup>19</sup> Pooley, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-208.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

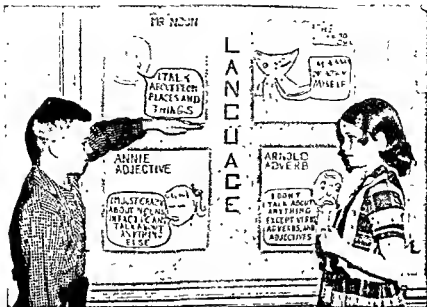


Fig. 11-2. Posters help us remember parts of speech. (Courtesy of Euclid, Ohio, public schools)

footed. Or, one could tell how he ran: *swiftly, with abandon*. Emphasis is given to the cause of the mishap by placing the dependent clause first in the sentence: *When John stumbled over a stone, he dropped the ball, etc.* The problem is one of clear, vivid expression, not one of correctness.

Emphasis is on usage in the lower grades. Later, terms such as *modifier, adjective, clause, dependent clause, and connective* appear in the course of discussion as convenient labels for ideas.

Situations will arise for expressing time relationships, and such connectives as *when, since, before, and after* will be found useful. Other situations will provide opportunities to use words expressing causal relationships, such as *because, since, inasmuch as*; and words expressing conditions and concession, as *although, even if*.

Occasions will arise at the secondary level when it will be necessary to point out that in matters of agreement, English verbs rarely change form to agree with subjects; that the forming of plurals of nouns is accomplished by adding *s* or *es* to the singular, but that verbs drop the *s* in forming the plural; that the use of pronouns for nouns provides economy of expression and avoids the monotony of repetition; that pronouns have special forms for

The next sentence had another kind of difficulty in it. . . .

TEACHER: What did you hear about Miss Nelva?

CHILD: That there was something in the paper about her.

TEACHER: Then you should write, "When I heard that there was something in the paper about you, I looked for your picture, but I could not find it."

Such discussion with the writer helps to make inductively taught grammar function as a tool of facile expression. Gradually, more and more responsibility can be placed upon the pupil to apply his knowledge of grammar in revising his writing. There will, however, continue to be occasions when only a conference with the teacher will clarify for the pupil how to correct his error without losing his idea.

Another situation may be one of attaining "speed and ease in narrative by combining sentences with the same subjects into sentences with compound predicates," as in the sentences *John fell down* and *John hurt his ankle*.<sup>24</sup> Or it may be a matter of securing variety in sentences for interest and emphasis by shifting modifying clauses, as in the sentence *I found I was dreaming when I woke up*. Or it may simply be the refining of an unconventional, crude type of expression.

The learning situation takes up a problem—how to express a given idea—and suggests a problem-solving type of attack, somewhat as follows: (1) The first step of the problem is to define a specific idea to be expressed in answer to the question, Exactly what am I trying to say? (2) Next, information is gathered on the proper form of expression. The kind of information varies with the maturity and the language background of the child. If the problem is new to him, he will profit from the study and comparison of good forms for expressing similar ideas. Erroneous forms may be studied profitably for contrast. If the problem of expression is similar to one previously studied, the child naturally recalls and applies relevant generalizations. The teacher provides the amount and kind of guidance needed by the child. (3) The child organizes and clarifies his thinking by adopting the new form of expression and possibly experiments with it in expressing similar ideas in the same manner. (4) A generalized statement of the principle or rule may be formulated and checked with the textbook. (5) Opportunities should be seized for applying the new principle or rule both in oral and written expression and in reading.

Certain general characteristics of the informal procedure may be summarized: (1) Grammar is taught as needed in expressional activities. (2) New concepts and rules are learned inductively through the study of live

<sup>24</sup> Hatfield, *op. cit.*, p. 231.



language and therefore have meaning for the learner. (3) Terms and statements of rules follow ideas and understanding. (4) The observation of language plays an important role. (5) Familiar generalizations, recalled and applied as needed in meeting new problems, gain increasing clarity and breadth of application. (6) The direction and rate of growth are determined by the teacher according to plan; development is orderly, systematic, and planned.

**Technical Grammar.** There is no good reason for questioning the validity of the informal procedure in handling grammar in the grades, even in junior and senior high schools. A well-planned, systematic development of concepts and principles throughout the grades should result in a well-rounded, mature understanding of the structure of language at the high school level. The fact that this end result is not accomplished suggests to some teachers and textbook makers the need for a more thorough, logical treatment of the subject at the high school level. The danger, of course, is that technical grammar will be entirely divorced from the communication phases of language work and will make little contribution to effective expression.

If technical grammar is taught as a more or less isolated subject, the organization should be based on large units of understanding, as suggested by Morrison, rather than on isolated fragmentary elements.<sup>25</sup> The organization would include such units as essential parts of a simple sentence, essential parts of compound and complex sentences, the parts of speech, and phrases and clauses as modifiers.

## EXERCISES

1. Observe the oral work of a class and list difficulties of expression.
2. Examine samples of children's written work in any grade and note difficulties of expression.
3. Suggest lines of attack on difficulties found in (1) and (2).
4. Compare a usage and a grammar approach to handling a difficulty of expression.
5. Cite current changes in usage and discuss from the point of view of acceptability.
6. Report on a recent study of usage or grammar in the language program, as: C. V. Hartung, "Doctrines of English Usage," *English Journal*, December, 1956, 56:517-525.

<sup>25</sup> H. C. Morrison, *The Practice of Teaching in the Secondary School*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1931, pp. 252-254. See also National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum, *The English Language Arts in the Secondary Schools*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1956, pp. 369-378.

## REFERENCES

- Broening, Angela M., and others: *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, pp. 7, 230, 309-318, 344.
- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, chap. 5.
- Davies, H. S.: *Grammar without Tears*, The John Day Company, Inc., New York, 1953.
- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, pp. 131-132, 141-146.
- : *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, chap. 14.
- and Frieda H. Dingee: *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 49-56.
- and Marian Zollinger: *Guiding Language Learning*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chap. 19.
- Fries, C. C.: *American English Grammar*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1940.
- Hartung, C. V.: "Doctrines of English Usage," *English Journal*, December, 1956, 56.517-525.
- Hatchett, Ethel L., and D. H. Hughes: *Teaching Language Arts in Elementary Schools*, The Ronald Press Company, New York, 1956, chap. 7.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, chaps. 17-18.
- Herrick, Virgil E., and Leland B. Jacobs: *Children and the Language Arts*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955, chap. 13.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp. 267, 308.
- Lee, J. Murray, and Dorris M. Lee: *The Child and His Curriculum*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1950, pp. 417-420.
- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, pp. 284-302.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, chap. 12.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 238-239.
- Pooley, R. C.: *Teaching English Usage*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1946, chaps. 9-10.
- A Program in English: A Guide for Teaching the Language Arts, K-12*, Denver Public Schools, Department of Instruction, Denver, Colo., 1953.
- Shane, Harold G.: *Research Helps in Teaching the Language Arts*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Washington, 1955, chap. 6.
- Stormzand, M. J., and M. V. O'Shea: *How Much English Grammar?* Warwick and York Incorporated, Baltimore, 1924.

Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, chap. 14.

Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 25-26, 84-85, 114-115, 164-168, 175-181, 219-221.

# Speech

**Speech in the Language Program.** The primary concern of the language teacher is developing children's ability to find something to say and their desire and willingness to say it. But to this training must be added instruction in the manner of speaking, for form of expression is important from the point of view of effectiveness and of the pupil's attitude toward his performance and himself. What is the place of speech as one element in the total program? By attention to the speech of social and business associates one notes marked differences in quality and is impressed with the tremendous social value of clear, correct speech. Good speech is good business. The significance of speech as a factor in the total personality of the individual may not be so outwardly apparent. Psychologists tell us that good speech generates confidence and a feeling of security in relations with others, while poor or halting speech lessens confidence, causes worry, and leads to withdrawal types of behavior. It would seem, then, that speech training deserves attention as a factor in communication.

The teacher is concerned with the speech of all his students, not only of the obvious few who have serious defects. It follows, then, that he must give attention to all the factors that contribute to effective oral expression. Among the several factors are articulation, voice, rhythm, and delivery. Articulation is concerned with the clear and accurate sounding of letters. Examples of common difficulties are the omission of sounds, as in *pay* for *play*; the distortion of sounds, such as the overarticulation of the *s* in *whistling*; and the substitution of sounds, such as *nun* for *run*.<sup>1</sup> The primary attributes of voice are pitch, volume or loudness, and quality. Rhythm re-

<sup>1</sup> See Wendell Johnson and others, *Speech Handicapped School Children*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1948, p. 5.

lates to the flow and stress of language and the grouping of words into phrases. Delivery includes such elements as animation, relationship with the audience, facial expression and gestures, and posture.

**Preliminary Survey of Pupils' Needs.** The aims of a survey of pupils' needs are to formulate standards, to estimate individual accomplishments with reference to the standards, and to note factors that may contribute to further development. Standards of normal expectancy vary with the age-grade-maturity grouping and with the social background of the pupils. There can be no hard and fast definition of standards suitable for all grades or for the same grade in all types of schools. There can be no substitute for the judgment of the teacher, matured by experience with a particular group of pupils. Estimates of individual accomplishments require the exercise of judgment in regard to factors requiring attention. The general goal is satisfying self-expression and effective communication. Any factor that causes failure to achieve this goal may be listed as a speech deficiency. A rough yardstick is offered by Johnson, ". . . a child's speech is defective when most listeners pay as much attention, or more, to how he speaks as to what he says."<sup>2</sup>

Teachers are cautioned against having standards that are too high or too low. To be avoided are complete indifference to careless, inadequate speech habits and overconcern with precision and perfection, which inhibit free speaking and attach an exaggerated importance to the mechanics of oral language. The chief purposes of speech are satisfying self-expression and effective communication. A child's speech is good when it accomplishes these purposes reasonably well. Individual potentialities should be considered, and children should be encouraged to take pride in and strive for reasonable improvement.

A practical procedure for the teacher to use in planning a preliminary survey of pupils' needs is to make a check list of items similar to the check lists described previously, using as the main topics the following: articulation, voice, rhythm, and delivery. There may also be a number of subtopics under each head, varying according to the preference of the teacher. The teacher will probably at first make general observations about areas of strength and weakness. This general survey may lead to listing specific difficulties. In a sixth-grade class including a number of Spanish and Portuguese children, a teacher noted the following difficulties:

*Articulation:* a for e; b for m; confusion of w and wh, in and ing

*Voice control:* almost inaudible, nasal, monotonous, rasping, too loud, too high, whining

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

lates to the flow and stress of language and the grouping of words into phrases. Delivery includes such elements as animation, relationship with the audience, facial expression and gestures, and posture.

**Preliminary Survey of Pupils' Needs.** The aims of a survey of pupils' needs are to formulate standards, to estimate individual accomplishments with reference to the standards, and to note factors that may contribute to further development. Standards of normal expectancy vary with the age-grade-maturity grouping and with the social background of the pupils. There can be no hard and fast definition of standards suitable for all grades or for the same grade in all types of schools. There can be no substitute for the judgment of the teacher, matured by experience with a particular group of pupils. Estimates of individual accomplishments require the exercise of judgment in regard to factors requiring attention. The general goal is satisfying self-expression and effective communication. Any factor that causes failure to achieve this goal may be listed as a speech deficiency. A rough yardstick is offered by Johnson, ". . . a child's speech is defective when most listeners pay as much attention, or more, to how he speaks as to what he says."<sup>1</sup>

Teachers are cautioned against having standards that are too high or too low. To be avoided are complete indifference to careless, inadequate speech habits and overconcern with precision and perfection, which inhibit free speaking and attach an exaggerated importance to the mechanics of oral language. The chief purposes of speech are satisfying self-expression and effective communication. A child's speech is good when it accomplishes these purposes reasonably well. Individual potentialities should be considered, and children should be encouraged to take pride in and strive for reasonable improvement.

A practical procedure for the teacher to use in planning a preliminary survey of pupils' needs is to make a check list of items similar to the check lists described previously, using as the main topics the following: articulation, voice, rhythm, and delivery. There may also be a number of subtopics under each head, varying according to the preference of the teacher. The teacher will probably at first make general observations about areas of strength and weakness. This general survey may lead to listing specific difficulties. In a sixth-grade class including a number of Spanish and Portuguese children, a teacher noted the following difficulties:

*Articulation:* a for e; b for m; confusion of w and wh, in and ing

*Voice control:* almost inaudible, nasal, monotonous, rasping, too loud, too high, whining

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

careless habits of speech, as in the case of John, age eight, in the third grade. John desired above all else to be chosen for a certain part in the marionette show. But he had cultivated several unpleasant means of calling attention to himself; among them was the habit of sounding *iv* instead of *l* or *r*. Thus, light bulb was *wight bowb*, worked was *wowked*, and lend was *wend*. In this sort of baby talk he apparently had been encouraged by his mother. Each time John asked to be in a play, someone in the group objected because he did not talk plainly. John undoubtedly was hurt, but the teacher felt that he was able to take the criticism and that nothing less would break his bad habit of speech. In private she tried to show him where to place his tongue to sound *l* and *r*. When at last John was convinced that he would never be chosen as an actor until he corrected his speech, he suddenly began speaking as correctly as anyone and was immediately commended and given a part in the play.

The use of marionettes and puppet shows has some distinct values. Facial expression and bodily movement are not so important as in dramatization, but more exacting requirements are made on the oral expression of ideas. The extremely shy child, even the stammerer or the stutterer, may participate freely and effectively when concealed by a screen.

Training in voice quality, pitch, volume, and enunciation is one of the values of choral speaking. Also, the shy child who hesitates to speak by himself gains courage from group participation. It is possible that choral speaking has special value for children with foreign-language backgrounds, where little opportunity is offered for using English in the home and possibly in play groups. The manner of handling choral speaking is a factor to be considered. Some teachers feel that the extensive reading together of much material is superior to the memorized, program type of work. Other possible speech-training values in choral speaking are bringing imagination to bear on the improvement of voice quality and articulation and training in phrasing and breath control by means of reading or reciting poems adapted to the purpose.\*

Similar to the language experiences in purpose and value are oral experiences in other fields, particularly oral reading and singing. Efforts at effective interpretation of poetry and prose aid in the development of voice quality, pitch, volume, inflection and emphasis, rhythm, etc. Dramatic reading and poetry recitation are especially valuable for cultivating desired

\* Lelitia Raubicheck, *How to Teach Good Speech in the Elementary Schools*, Noble & Noble, Publishers, Inc., New York, 1937, pp. 209-210. Also see National Council of Teachers of English, *Commission on the English Curriculum*, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.



Fig. 12-1. Dramatization provides training in speech. (Courtesy of Euclid, Ohio, public schools)

provide incentives for clear, impressive presentation, situations in which need for specific abilities and skills is revealed, and real opportunities for the immediate use of newly acquired skills and abilities. All purposeful oral language experiences contribute to the development of desired speech skills—the individual experiences of making talks and reports and of telling stories, and the social ones of engaging in conversations and discussions and of making introductions and telephone calls. Some experiences make special as well as general contributions to the development of speech skills.

Dramatization offers opportunities for participation of a type in which expression is especially important and in which the shy child can participate with less feeling of self-consciousness. In the spirit of play, children speak naturally, as they do at home or on the playground. The need for clear expression is apparent and immediate; the dramatization fails unless the actors make themselves heard. Several children working together gain confidence from each other. An interest in playing a part well helps to overcome self-consciousness.

Dramatization may also provide an incentive for correcting faulty or



accompanies the various purposeful experiences. In such experiences the need for improvement is immediately revealed and accompanied by the desire for clear, effective expression and definite corrective effort. Attention is called to a factor of prime importance (such as talking loudly enough to make everyone hear) in the preliminary preparation period or in the follow-up evaluation period. A brief discussion or demonstration of a particular point may be in order. The teacher naturally does not interrupt; corrective work is not permitted to interfere with freedom of expression. The amount and timing of such incidental attention to speech factors vary with age, with the class, with the temperament of the individual, and with the type of disability. Group corrective work with young children is mainly of the incidental type; wisely handled, it contributes to satisfaction in good performance rather than to discouragement.\*

**Place of Training Lessons and Exercises.** Training lessons and exercises provide a direct, intensive attack on various speech elements. Habits of speaking may be so firmly established as to fail to respond to general classroom conditions, however favorable, and even to incidental treatment. Raubicheck is firmly convinced of the need for a vigorous, direct attack. She points out that children coming to school have already had four or five years of experience in speaking, and that the teacher's problem is often one of attempting to change patterns already well established. It is a problem of *reeducation*. Passive imitation is not sufficient to bring about changes; a direct attack is necessary.\*

As a working principle it may be stated that special training lessons should supplement other measures when the latter fail to bring about the desired improvement. To be effective the training lesson must have a purpose apparent to the child, and the exercise must be closely related to the expressional activities. The danger in this type of training is the danger that threatens all practice work: isolation and formalism. The more mature the children, the more readily the training lesson is understood and accepted.

**Organization for Training Lessons.** Since the value of the training lesson depends largely on the recognition of need by the learner, an effort must be made to determine individual needs and to provide training suited to those who need it. This adaptation requires an inventory of speech deficiencies, such as was described earlier in the chapter. The children who need a particular type of training are brought together into a small, homogeneous, temporary group and given the necessary instruction and practice.

\* Paul McKee, *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, p. 321.

\* Raubicheck, *op. cit.*, p. 47.



Fig. 12-2. The tape recorder is useful in developing speech habits. (Courtesy of Tidyman Studios)

abilities. Singing involves attention to voice projection and tone quality, and it is possible that the training carries over into speech to some extent.

The motivation for speech training that comes from purposeful expression is strengthened by the occasional use of various devices. For example, in a broadcast over a toy radio the play element appeals to children at various grade levels; and, of course, the importance of clear speaking becomes immediately apparent. Another device coming into use is the tape recording of children's oral work. The handling of oral work has been handicapped in the past by the impermanence of the spoken word. With the recorder it is possible to preserve and study objectively the child's story or report, to discover deficiencies in various speech and language elements, and to observe progress in overcoming specific difficulties. Deficiencies that pass unnoticed in speaking are recognized at once in the reproduction. Teachers claim very satisfactory results when the recording is fairly true. Fidelity of recording depends on the quality of the instrument and the skill of the operator.

**Incidental Training.** In proceeding from general conditions favorable to speech development to specific measures for bringing about improvement, one is impressed in the first place with the incidental training which

in isolation, it is time to re-learn the whole word. Opportunity for pronouncing "mouth," "teeth," "breath," should then be given; and the child should be directed to check his production in the mirror and to feel the teeth against the tongue tip. When the student is able to pronounce the words correctly, he should be given rhythmic phrases to pronounce such as "teeth in the mouth," or "the tenth of the month." These phrases should later be incorporated in sentences. Finally, care should be taken whenever the "th" sound appears at the end of a word. The child should be complimented when he pronounces it correctly or should have his failure called to his attention.

**Children with Foreign-language Backgrounds.** In many areas of the country, teachers find in their classes children—either American- or foreign-born—who come from homes in which a foreign language is spoken. The children's efforts to think and to communicate in a new language present difficulties, but the difficulty is more than one of communication. Inability to communicate tends to develop lack of confidence and a feeling of insecurity, which may cause withdrawal within the classroom and on the playground. Foreign-born children are often regarded as shy, quiet, and unresponsive, but in their own group they are cheerful and loquacious. The foreign child may become isolated and suspect to the other children. He may have a tendency to be ashamed of his background and parents.

A large part of the teacher's task is to make such a child feel comfortable and confident in the school group. The teacher can do this by personally making the child welcome and by enlisting the cooperation of other children in making friendly advances. He may point out to the children the advantage of speaking another language and the efforts required by older children and by adults to learn a foreign language. He may emphasize the real, often rich, cultural heritage of the national or ethnic group the child represents, and may even invite adult representatives of the group to visit the class to talk about their accomplishments. The class may learn some common phrases from the foreign language or learn to sing a song in the language. English-speaking children in this way may come to appreciate some of the difficulty in learning to speak another language.

The teacher should realize, also, that the difficulty of participating in class discussions is due in part to the lack of a common background of experiences. The normal home life of the foreign-born child may not provide the common experiences shared by other children. The total school program should be rich in varied experiences providing the foreign child with thoughts and feelings to share with the others.

While personal and social factors operate in the background of the child's efforts to adjust to his American environment, the key problem remains one of communication. Communication in English is hampered by lack of

Possibly individual instruction must be used at times. The language program must be sufficiently flexible to allow such specialized group and individual work.<sup>7</sup>

**Handling a Training Lesson.** In handling a training lesson for a class, group, or individual, the teacher must make provision for the learner to (1) discover a need, (2) develop an idea of correct form, (3) practice the correct form, and (4) use the correct form in real situations. Need is revealed best in purposeful experiences, but at times special exercises may be useful to test certain abilities. Since the work deals with oral expression the child must get the correct idea of form by oral demonstration, usually by the teacher but occasionally by superior pupils. The teacher must assure himself that the sound is correctly heard; failure to reproduce a correct sound may be due to faulty hearing as well as to faulty speech. The idea of correct form is not secured until the child can produce the desired sound or effect—get the "feel" of it. Practice may be distributed over several periods. Sufficient drill must be provided to impress the correct form upon the child and to make it habitual in speech.

An example of a training lesson in the correction of the sound *th* is given by Raubichek in the quotation below. The adaptability to an individual or small group and the importance of teacher instruction-demonstration should be noted.<sup>8</sup>

For example, a child in your class says "mouf" instead of "mouth." He also says "teef" and "breatf" instead of "teeth" and "breath." The procedure might be as follows: try first to obtain the correction through conscious imitation; repeat the word slowly, asking the child to listen carefully and to look at you while you say the word. Sometimes this is enough to reset the pattern and all that is required to remind the child to use the new form whenever he slips into his old habit in rapid conversation. Sometimes, however, although the child listens carefully, he is unable to distinguish between the right and the wrong form or to reproduce what he hears. In such a case it is necessary to add to the auditory stimulation, visual and kinaesthetic images. The difference between "mouf" and "mouth" lies in the substitution of "f" for "th" in the final sound. "F" is made by putting the upper teeth against the lower lip and blowing out. "Th," on the other hand, is made by a contact between the tip of the tongue and the cutting edge of the upper front teeth. The air is then breathed out against this barrier. In order to correct the child who says "mouf" instead of "mouth," draw his attention to the way the last sound looks as you produce it. Supply the child with a mirror and direct him to place the tongue in the right position. Sometimes it is necessary to advise him to protrude his tongue between the teeth in order to make the sound. When he has been able to make the sound

<sup>7</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, *Commission on the English Curriculum, The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, p. 261.

<sup>8</sup> Raubichek, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

immature or defective child receives some of the specific retraining he needs. General measures for discovering needs and general procedures for meeting the needs have been presented. The teacher will soon identify the superior and the noticeably deficient children and will observe that between these two groups are a considerable number of children who have such minor difficulties as not speaking loudly enough to be heard, speaking indistinctly, and mispronouncing common words. General and incidental measures usually serve the needs of superior children and those with minor difficulties. Now particular attention is directed to those children whose speech is conspicuously poorer than that of most children and whose difficulties require specific remedial treatment.<sup>10</sup>

It is stated that approximately ten per cent of every class has speech difficulties serious enough to justify specific corrective work. Defects vary in degree or seriousness; some are the result of habits that may be changed by retraining, while others have deep-rooted causes in physical malformations of the speech organs or in emotional attitudes. The thoroughly trained teacher will be able to identify the particular defect and know whether to undertake the correction himself or refer the child to a professional person. Hatfield gives the following lists of defects distinguishing between those which require specialists and those which can be handled by the teacher:<sup>11</sup>

**A. Serious difficulties, requiring specialists.**

1. The rapid, indistinct, or stuttering speech of the very "nervous" child. This will often be associated with facial grimaces and tics.
2. Hoarseness.
3. The slow, monotonous and partly unintelligible speech of poorly coordinated or partly paralyzed children.
4. Extremely delayed or retarded speech.
5. Any form of defective speech in the case of a "sickly," asthenic child. This includes children who have had many severe illnesses as infants or young children, children suffering from heart disease or from rare, undiagnosed diseases.

**B. Difficulties not requiring specialists.**

1. Voice and its use.
  - a. Loudness. Just loud enough for the occasion (not too weak and not too powerful).
  - b. Pitch. An appropriate pitch for the age and physical state.
  - c. Quality. A pleasant quality (not harsh, thin, and strained but resonant and pleasant).

<sup>10</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum, *Language Arts for Today's Children*, pp. 133-141.

<sup>11</sup> W. W. Hatfield, *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, pp. 272-273. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

vocabulary, by pronunciation, and by the difficulty of putting words together into acceptable phrases and sentences. The inflection of the voice and the rhythm of speaking may also present problems. Each foreign language presents its peculiar problems. The French child will always slip on *th* and *wh* and will stumble often on *ch*. The German child will find his greatest problem with *wh*, *th*, *j*, and short *u*. Hebrew-speaking children cause their playmates much merriment in saying *sink* for *sing*, *lem* for *lame*, and *vot* for *what*. Spanish-speaking children have trouble with words like *chair*, *yellow*, *think*, *hill*, *bird*, *book*, and *woman* because they contain elements foreign to the Spanish tongue. A teacher from Hawaii reports that her children have a tendency to memorize whole sections of contextual material due to the fact that language training is not carried over into other fields.

The teacher naturally will adjust his instructional measures to the particular child and situation. The child may know little English and come from a home in which all conversation is in a foreign language; or he may have acquired at home and in the community a mongrel kind of English marked by defects of structure, voice, inflection, or phonetics. Or, recently arrived from a foreign country, he may have had no experience at all with the language of his new environment. A few points may be noted: (1) It is important that the child speaking a foreign language should hear much acceptable English to accustom his ear to the sound of the language. (2) With a beginner, the method must be direct—concrete, objective, and dramatic. (3) Emphasis should be placed on common experiences and common words, as *door*, *table*, *chair*, *see*, *give*. (4) For young children, a toy kit is helpful. (5) Sets of pictures dealing with familiar home experiences or topics under study at school are useful. (6) Words should be put into phrases, and pronounced separately as necessary. (7) A phrase or sentence must be accompanied by action: *I pick up a pencil, I go to the window, I give you a book*. (8) For mature children, difficulties are noted and attacked directly, with much emphasis on hearing and practice in pronunciation. (9) Incidental correction in talking or reporting is helpful in a later stage, such as giving a child the precise word needed to express himself and helping with the pronunciation of a troublesome word.\*

**Speech Correction.** In the preceding pages of this chapter an attempt has been made to outline a comprehensive program of language development suited to the needs of all members of a class: a program in which the superior child has the opportunity to perfect his speech abilities and the

\* El Paso Public Schools, *A Manual of Aids and Devices for Teaching Bilingual Children, Grade 3*, El Paso, Texas, 1946.

defects requiring the services of the professional correctionist. The time that a correctionist can give to a particular case is necessarily limited, but the teacher works with the child throughout the day. The correctionist will give specific directions and exercises for the teacher to carry out, and he will give advice on the general handling of the particular child. The effectiveness of the total program depends largely on the teacher.

In general, the teacher can help the speech-defective child by assuming a direct, calm, objective attitude; by recognizing that the speech defect may be a symptom of personality imbalance and helping the child to adjust himself socially to the group; by keeping the child from situations in which the difficulty is aggravated, but not by pampering him; and by protecting the child from the thoughtless ridicule of his classmates.

Much can be learned about the nature, cause, and treatment of particular defects. In the few remaining pages of this chapter will be offered a bare sampling of the material available in standard books on speech correction, such as Wendell Johnson's *Speech Handicapped School Children*<sup>12</sup> and C. Van Riper's *Speech Correction*.<sup>13</sup>

**Disorders of Articulation.** Disorders of articulation are very common, constituting from 70 to 85 per cent of all types treated by correctionists. From 5 to 10 per cent of all school children have some articulatory difficulty. Types of disorders include the omission of sounds, as in *weel* for *wheel*; the distortion of sounds, as in *mush* for *much*; and the substitution of sounds, as in *theether* for *sister*.<sup>14</sup> A child may make one or more of these types of errors, and the error may vary with words and with the position of the sound within the words.

Most articulatory defects are the result of faulty learning. Organic conditions such as poor tooth structure or abnormal palate and tongue development may contribute to the difficulty, but they are not the primary cause. The majority of difficulties cannot be removed by surgery. Faulty learning is attributable to the speech patterns set by others, often by parents; to the persistence of infantile speech habits because of lack of stimulation for maturing; and possibly, in some cases, to emotional maladjustments caused by various social factors, such as tension in the home. Conditions during the school life of the child—*anxiety and frustration in speech situations*—may maintain or aggravate the difficulties.

The treatment of an articulatory defect begins with an exact definition of the difficulty and the determination of contributing factors. Some evi-

<sup>12</sup> Johnson and others, *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> C. Van Riper, *Speech Correction*, rev. ed., Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1947.

<sup>14</sup> Johnson and others, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

- d. Rate and rhythm. Avoidance of excessive rate and jerky phrasing.
- e. Variety. Change of pitch and loudness to suit the sense of what is said.
2. Utterance and enunciation.
  - a. Articulation clear-cut and intelligible (not mumbled).
  - b. Phrase as unit (not word as unit).
  - c. Weak forms. Unstressed "a," "and," "have" (not *a*, *and*, *have*).
  - d. Sentence pattern. Speaking according to sense (not sing-song).
3. Consonants.
  - a. B: Ben's ball (not *Pen's* pail).
  - b. P: not to be omitted—up (not *uh*).
  - c. M: my mama (not *hy* *bubba*).
  - d. T: ten (not *it*en), beauty (not *beautty*).
  - e. D: today (not *todthay*).
  - f. N: nine (not *dide*).
  - g. K: kite (not *ite*).
  - h. G: go (not *doe*).
  - i. NG: going (not *goin* and not *goink* and not *goings*).
  - j. F: fine (not *pine* and not *vine*).
  - k. V: very (not *fery* and not *wery*).
  - l. S: see (not *thee* and not *she* and not *he*).
  - m. Z: hullz (not *hills*), prezident (not *president*).
  - n. CH: chores (not *shores* and not *lores*).
  - o. J: college (not *collich*), jump (not *jump*).
  - p. L: little (not *witto* and not *liddo*).
  - q. R: red (not *wed* and not *yed*), try (not *twy*).
  - r. W: will (not *vill*).
  - s. WH: white (not *wite*).
  - t. TH: think (not *tink* and not *fin*k and not *sink*).
  - u. TH: mother (not *mudder* and not *mover* and not *muzzer*).
4. Vowels and diphthongs.
  - a. Short A: candy (not *cen*dy), catch (not *ket*ch), can (not *kin*).
  - b. OU: about (not *abaut*).
  - c. Long I: mine (not *mo*in and not *ma*in).
  - d. OI: boil (not *ber*l).
  - e. ER, UR, etc.: personal (not *po*sonal), hurt (not *ho*it).
  - f. Short E: again (not *agin*), friend (not *frand*), pen (not *pin*).
  - g. Short U: come (not *cal*m), just (not *jist*).

**The Teacher's Responsibility in the Correction Program.** It is apparent that many kinds of speech deficiencies can be handled by a competent teacher directly. He must make a complete inventory of the speech difficulties of his pupils, provide time and place for remedial work in the total language program, secure the necessary materials (some of which are available in textbooks), and develop instructional procedures and exercises suited to particular defects.

The teacher has a responsibility, also, in the handling of the deep-rooted



defects requiring the services of the professional correctionist. The time that a correctionist can give to a particular case is necessarily limited, but the teacher works with the child throughout the day. The correctionist will give specific directions and exercises for the teacher to carry out, and he will give advice on the general handling of the particular child. The effectiveness of the total program depends largely on the teacher.

In general, the teacher can help the speech-defective child by assuming a direct, calm, objective attitude; by recognizing that the speech defect may be a symptom of personality imbalance and helping the child to adjust himself socially to the group; by keeping the child from situations in which the difficulty is aggravated, but not by pampering him; and by protecting the child from the thoughtless ridicule of his classmates.

Much can be learned about the nature, cause, and treatment of particular defects. In the few remaining pages of this chapter will be offered a bare sampling of the material available in standard books on speech correction, such as Wendell Johnson's *Speech Handicapped School Children*<sup>12</sup> and C. Van Riper's *Speech Correction*.<sup>13</sup>

**Disorders of Articulation.** Disorders of articulation are very common, constituting from 70 to 85 per cent of all types treated by correctionists. From 5 to 10 per cent of all school children have some articulatory difficulty. Types of disorders include the omission of sounds, as in *weel* for *wheel*; the distortion of sounds, as in *mush* for *much*; and the substitution of sounds, as in *thether* for *sister*.<sup>14</sup> A child may make one or more of these types of errors, and the error may vary with words and with the position of the sound within the words.

Most articulatory defects are the result of faulty learning. Organic conditions such as poor tooth structure or abnormal palate and tongue development may contribute to the difficulty, but they are not the primary cause. The majority of difficulties cannot be removed by surgery. Faulty learning is attributable to the speech patterns set by others, often by parents; to the persistence of infantile speech habits because of lack of stimulation for maturing; and possibly, in some cases, to emotional maladjustments caused by various social factors, such as tension in the home. Conditions during the school life of the child—*anxiety and frustration in speech situations*—may maintain or aggravate the difficulties.

The treatment of an articulatory defect begins with an exact definition of the difficulty and the determination of contributing factors. Some evi-

<sup>12</sup> Johnson and others, *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> C. Van Riper, *Speech Correction*, rev. ed., Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1947.

<sup>14</sup> Johnson and others, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

dence is obtained by close observation of the child's speech. This information is supplemented by results of speech-test exercises (such as those given in textbooks and in speech-correction books<sup>15</sup>) and by data assembled from hearing tests, physical examinations, and intelligence tests.

A general procedure for handling articulatory speech defects is suggested by Johnson:<sup>16</sup>

1. Eliminate, or minimize the effect of, factors causing the defect.
2. Create vivid auditory impressions which will enable the child to recognize readily both the error and the correct sound, and to discriminate between the two whenever he hears them.
3. Teach correct production of the sound in isolation.
4. Strengthen the production of the sound so that it can be produced easily and at will.
5. Secure transfer of the correct sound into connected speech in a small nucleus of commonly used words.
6. Make the production of the correct sound, instead of the error, habitual in all connected speech.

Each of these steps is developed in some detail by Johnson. In discovering and eliminating contributing factors, the teacher may find it necessary to investigate home conditions and secure the cooperation of the parents. In carrying on the corrective work through the several stages, the teacher will draw on his knowledge of general teaching procedures and utilize such resources in the way of special materials and procedures as may be available.

**Retarded Speech Development.** Some of the children participate little or not at all in oral work because of shyness and lack of confidence; but they can and do talk on occasion, under favorable conditions. Other non-participants have never learned to talk and speak freely under any conditions; they have a limited vocabulary, may use baby talk, and may give little indication of comprehension. Contributing factors may be low mentality, defective hearing, or environmental factors such as parental pampering, isolation, jealousy of another child, feeling of rejection by parents, severe illness, and a foreign-language background.<sup>17</sup>

It is obvious that extreme cases of delayed speech may have deep-rooted causes and that the advice of a psychologist or speech correctionist would be valuable to the teacher. Without such professional help the teacher

<sup>15</sup> See Grant Fairbanks, *Voice and Articulation Drillbook*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1940.

<sup>16</sup> Johnson and others, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 6.

may attempt to discover the causes himself by visiting the home to observe home conditions and to find out how much the child talks at home. At school the teacher may promote a wholesome classroom atmosphere and begin a training program with very simple words which the child has occasion to use. Pictures related to familiar home and community activities are stimulating, particularly to the foreign child of normal intelligence whose experience with English is limited. Development may be very slow; patience is required of the pupil and teacher.

**Disorders of Voice.** Voice disorders, less common than defects of articulation, contribute only 10 to 15 per cent of the cases with which the correctionist must deal; but the treatment of some of them presents greater difficulty.<sup>18</sup>

A good voice is loud enough to be heard in the situation in which a person is speaking and is adequate in pitch, pleasing in quality, and sufficiently flexible to give emphasis to important ideas and to express deep feeling. Disorders are variations from the qualities of a good voice that are great enough to distract the attention of or prove unpleasant to the listener. Normal differences of age and sex must be recognized and considerable latitude allowed for individual differences. In general, the seriousness of a disorder is determined by the extent of variation from the normal.

Specific speech disorders include:<sup>19</sup>

**Pitch:** "Pitch levels which are unusual, or inappropriate to their age or sex"; too high or too low.

**Loudness:** Too low because of habit, disease, or deep emotional or personality disturbance; or too loud because of habit or hearing deficiency.

**Voice quality:** Nasal, breathy, hoarse, or harsh.

**Flexibility:** Monotonous, lack of expression.

Some of the causes are organic in nature, and the teacher will do well to refer such cases to a qualified physician. For example, extreme hoarseness may be caused by a pathological condition of the larynx; the child with adenoids has difficulty in producing sounds that require nasal resonance. However, "most voice problems cannot be accounted for in terms of organic causes. For various reasons, the *functioning* of the voice mechanism may be deficient, and a voice problem may exist, even though the structure is entirely adequate."<sup>20</sup> Some voice problems are the result of habit or imitation. It was difficult, in one case, to account for the guttural voice

<sup>18</sup> Van Riper, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

<sup>19</sup> Johnson and others, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-157.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

quality of a college student until the instructor had occasion to visit the home and found that both parents and four other children had the same quality.

Another group of significant factors are psychological disturbances or maladjustments. Johnson says:<sup>21</sup>

Psychological maladjustments may cover the range from deep-rooted emotional disturbances to the shyness and timidity that seem to be characteristic of a considerable number of children. We have noted the rather common belief that vocal characteristics reveal personality traits. This belief is substantiated by a rather large accumulation of clinical observations and some systematic research investigations. . . . Cases could also be described to illustrate the relationship of other types of voice problems to personality factors. For example, chronic feelings of anxiety and insecurity may result in excessive bodily tensions which in turn may produce vocal disturbances, such as harsh quality or high pitch. Deficient loudness may come from excessive shyness, and so on

Other contributing factors, according to Van Riper, are hearing deficiency; delayed sexual development; voice change at puberty; sluggish articulators—palate, tongue, lips, and jaws; physical strain, frequently caused by over strenuous play; and general tenseness, caused by emotional states of fear, excitement, and rage.<sup>22</sup>

Correction begins with convincing the speaker that he has a defect. This is not easy because ordinarily a person is not aware of his difficulty. It may be possible to lead the speaker to observe the reaction of others to his voice or to make a recording for reproduction and study. If the disorder has a physical or emotional basis, it is necessary to determine the cause and to adopt suitable measures. Specific disorders may be handled in various ways, depending on the training and skill of the teacher. For example, in treating disorders of pitch it is desirable to determine the natural pitch of the voice by determining total range and pitching the voice at or near the middle register. Treatment for impaired flexibility may include overcoming shyness and timidity; training in oral reading, with emphasis on expressiveness; and giving practice in normal, purposeful speaking situations.

**Stuttering.** Stuttering is relatively infrequent, occurring in possibly 1 per cent of a school population; but of course it is a serious problem for the child of school age. It is observed that many children, if not all, are hesitant in speech during their early years. Ninety-nine per cent acquire satisfactory fluency in the course of normal development. Stuttering, which

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>22</sup> Van Riper, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-275.

appears in the unfortunate 1 per cent at about the age of three, is a condition of speech acquired as a result of environmental influences, chiefly the overanxiety of parents. The child can be retrained into habits of fluent speaking if the work is begun early. The help of a specialist is desirable, but the classroom teacher can do much for the child. Johnson outlines and discusses at length a ten-point program for dealing with the stutterer. Included are the following measures: <sup>22</sup>

1. Help the child to face the problem frankly.
2. Build the child's confidence in his basic physical ability to speak normally.
3. Build the child's confidence in his ability to handle speaking situations acceptably even as a stutterer.
4. Train the child to eliminate unnecessary and undesirable speech mannerisms.
5. Train the child to delay and slow down his stuttering reactions.
6. Train the child to stutter as easily as possible.
7. Encourage the child to talk as much as possible.
8. Encourage the child to cultivate his abilities and personality assets.
9. Encourage the child in good physical hygiene practices.
10. Take proper steps to prevent the development of stuttering in children who might otherwise acquire it.

**Impaired Hearing.** Another type of pupil with whom the teacher must deal is the child with impaired hearing. The extent of impairment will vary from very slight to total loss of hearing. Hearing may be suspected, before conclusive evidence is revealed through suitable tests, by the child's inability to follow oral directions; by difficulties in spelling and reading; and by behavior traits such as listlessness and unresponsiveness or belligerency and unhappiness in group activities. The handling of the deaf and extremely hard of hearing requires the training of the specialist. The teacher can do much to facilitate the learning of the child with relatively slight impairment. Johnson suggests the following practical measures: <sup>23</sup>

1. Having him sit as near as possible to where he is likely to be most of the time.
2. Allowing him to move freely about the room in order to hear what is going on.
3. Being sure, when giving a direction, that the hard of hearing child is following what is being said. One effective way to check is to ask him occasionally to stand and repeat the direction to the rest of the class.
4. Finding a time to explain the problem of the hard of hearing child to the other pupils.
5. Helping him to understand and to acknowledge his hearing problem.

<sup>22</sup> Johnson and others, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-257.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 315-316.

This is one of the most important aspects of any handicapped child's problem, but it is especially important for the hard of hearing.

6. Allowing him to recite and to read orally just like any other member of the class. Some hard of hearing children have speech problems as a result of the hearing loss.

7. Seeing to it that he is included in all sorts of extracurricular activities participated in by his classmates. Frequently a hard of hearing child will be a bystander when a group game is being played because he didn't hear the rules and doesn't want to ask.

## EXERCISES

1. Make a preliminary inventory of the speech-training needs of a particular class.
2. Make a list of the serious difficulties that require special remedial work.
3. Plan a training lesson for a specific difficulty which a teacher may properly handle.
4. Outline a general program of speech training suited to the needs of a class as revealed in the preliminary inventory.
5. Report observed practices in speech development. Evaluate.

## REFERENCES

- Artley, A. Sterl, and others: *Interrelationships among the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1954, p. 29.
- Broening, Angela M., and others: *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, pp. 325-327.
- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, pp. 132-141.
- : *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, chap. 6.
- and Marian Zollinger: *Guiding Language Learning*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chap. 6.
- Emery, R. M.: "The Classroom Teacher and Speech Correction," *Elementary School Journal*, November, 1955, 56:110-116.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, pp. 272-274.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp. 314-317.
- Johnson, Wendell, and others: *Speech Handicapped School Children*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1948.
- Lee, J. Murray, and Dorris M. Lee: *The Child and His Curriculum*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1950, pp. 377-380.
- McCarthy, Dorothea, and others: *Factors That Influence Language Growth*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1953, pp. 11-12.

- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, pp. 317-321.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, pp. 220-221, 261, 318-319.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 128-141.
- Ogilvie, Mardel: *Speech in the Elementary School*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1954, chaps. 11-12.
- Rasmussen, Carrie, and others: *The Role of Speech in the Elementary School*, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1947.
- Raubicheck, Letitia: *How to Teach Good Speech in the Elementary Schools*, Noble & Noble, Publishers, Inc., New York, 1937.
- Smith, Nila B.: *Areas of Research Interest in the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1952, pp. 20-27.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, pp. 88-89, 204-206, 209-214, 216-218.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 181-186.
- Van Riper, C.: *Speech Correction*, rev. ed., Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1947.

## Form and Mechanics in Written Work

Form and mechanics in written work include capitalization, punctuation, arrangement of work on a page (manuscript form), and neatness. They are specific skills governed by conventions and rules but closely related to thinking. They can be taught mechanically or meaningfully. When the skills are taught mechanically, they are identified, presented as isolated elements, and learned by rule and by practice in formal exercises. In meaningful teaching, on the other hand, the skills are developed in close association with the language experiences of which they are a necessary part. The significance of and reason for the various conventions are made apparent to the learner; thus, rules appear as meaningful generalizations following abundant experience with concrete examples. Practice may be required to establish habits, but the practice follows meaningful development and has an immediate, recognizable purpose.

Form and mechanics are properly regarded as aids to the reader in comprehending thought; they frame the thought and make the meaning clear. They also give evidence of clear thinking on the part of the writer. For example, sentence division, indicated by capital and period, shows the separation of ideas into complete thoughts; the nature of the thought is indicated by the final mark: period, question mark, or exclamation point. The colon indicates a series to follow; the comma indicates sentence elements out of their usual order, separates interrupters to the main thought, and makes clear the members of an enumeration. Proper handling makes



the learning of mechanics an aid, not a block, to thinking and expression.<sup>1</sup>

The close relationship between mechanics and thinking suggests that mechanics are not mastered at one time; the need for mechanics changes with and parallels the growing complexity of thought and written expression.

**Specific Skills.** The form and mechanics skills to be included in the language program are obviously those which are needed by children in their language experiences. Needs will vary with age, grade, maturity, cultural background, and type of language program in the school. Manuscript form includes margins at the left-hand and right-hand sides of the paper, spacing at top and bottom, indentation of paragraphs, and correct placing of titles and dates. Common uses of capitals are in the first words of sentences, lines of poetry, direct quotations, and titles; in names of particular persons and places; in the word *I*; and in topics in an outline and important words in titles. Neatness in written work relates to cleanliness, corrections, and handwriting. The chief punctuation marks and their uses are as follows:

*Periods:*

- After a declarative sentence
- After an initial
- After a common abbreviation
- After letters and numerals in outlining

*Question marks:*

- After interrogative sentences

*Commas:*

- Between day and month of year
- Between city and state
- After the salutation and complimentary close of a friendly letter
- After *yes* and *no*
- After the name of a person addressed
- Within a series

*Quotation marks:*

- Around direct quotations
- Around titles of books and articles

<sup>1</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, *Commission on the English Curriculum, The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, pp. 287-288.

*Hyphens:*

After part of a word divided at the end of a line  
Within compound terms

*Apostrophes:*

Within contractions  
Within possessives

*Colons:*

After salutations in business letters

It will be well for the teacher to accumulate a list of the common difficulties of his pupils. Among them he may find many of the difficulties reported by McKee:<sup>2</sup>

1. Omitting the period at the close of a sentence
2. Using a comma in place of a period at the close of a sentence
3. Omitting the apostrophe in the possessive
4. Omitting the quotation marks surrounding direct quotation
5. Using a period for a comma in sentences
6. Omitting a question mark at the end of a question
7. Failing to use a comma to set off words of direct address
8. Failure to use a comma in a date
9. Omission of a comma to separate a series
10. Omission of comma after introductory expressions such as "Yes" or "No"

Following is a fourth grader's description of a model, good in content but weak in mechanics:

We want to show how the Indains of California live.

I made the house it is made of grass and sawdust the real house are made out of tules and wild hemp plants and milk weed plants and other plants.

They used the house for slepmg and storyng food and for cooking.

We made the trees out of brown paper and pipe cleaners.

We made the lake out of colored sponges we made the back gron out of blue pant and chalk and wite pant also.

**Emphasis in Particular Grades.** The teacher faces the practical problem of setting up goals in mechanics for a particular class. Practical assistance is offered by textbooks and courses of study. These are designed to meet general needs in a school system or an even larger area, and serve only as a guide to the teacher. However, since classes within a single city vary widely in language maturity and needs, the teacher should make a study

<sup>2</sup> Paul McKee, *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939, p. 322. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

sentences with capitals, and to close them with periods or question marks. In class compositions, written on the board at the dictation of the children, the teacher is careful to use proper forms and to call the children's attention to them. New mechanics are introduced as needs arise in communication experiences. In time, children begin to write compositions of several sentences, social and business letters, outlines, bibliographies, and the like. Each new experience provides an opportunity for the introduction of new mechanics, as well as for the continued use of the old. Experiences serve to give meaning to mechanics and to provide motivation for learning them.

Problems arise with the precocious child whose language development far surpasses that of the body of the class and whose creative efforts demand mature mechanics for which he and the class are not ready. The power of oral expression of the imaginative child so far exceeds his command of written mechanics that he has difficulty putting his thoughts on paper. Brown and Butterfield report the story of Dorothy, an eight-year-old, third-grade child, who voluntarily wrote the following continued story of seven paragraphs: \*

#### A MERRY CHRISTMAS

"Merry Christmas, everybody, Merry Christmas" shouted Janet Christmas morning.

Cousin David from Washington was with her for Christmas, so they ran down stairs together. "I've got a game" "Here's some iceskates," "A dress for my doll," "An electric train.

These were only a few of the many cris that arose. But at last Janet fell over something near the back of the tree, it had a card on it that said "Janet." She tore the thin peice of paper that was over it and screamed. "A desk, a great big desk" "A what" asked David because Janet was making so much noice jumping up and down that he couldn't hear what she said.

At last the two succeeded in getting it out, and Janet at once started to put things on it in a very untidy fashion.

"Children, Children this will never do!" said Mother when she came down, (as she put her hands over her ears,) "You soud like a cyclone." It was pretty hard for her to get the children dressed and have them eat their breakfast. But they were soon ready to go to Grandmother's, the idia of chicken pie and turkey struck them.

At Grandmother's they played many games. But at last came the time for that dinner. David acted as if he liked Grandmother's dinner's.

After awhile Grandmother brought out the toys of her own children for her grandchildren. The girls liked to help with the dishes, but the boy's liked the

\* Dorothy L. Brown and Marguerite Butterfield, *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, pp. 19-20. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

book's about trips the moon and such thing's. they were sorry that they couldnt read them all right away.

But it was a very merry Christmas.

What should the teacher do with this child? Should he require Dorothy to confine her expression within the limits of manageable mechanics or allow her freedom of expression? If the latter, some compromise must be made with mechanics. The authors advise the teacher to let the child express herself freely, to give her such individual help as time allows by supplying needed mechanics, to value the freshness, vividness, originality of expression, and to avoid trying to make the composition mechanically perfect. Mechanics are subordinate to freedom of expression.

**Class Development Lessons.** It is generally agreed that new mechanics should be approached through purposeful experiences in which they are needed for the clear expression of ideas, in common practice this is a simultaneous, whole-class approach. The new skill must be highlighted in some manner, either as an incidental part of the writing experience or in a special developmental lesson. The choice of procedure will reflect the teacher's philosophy and his judgment of the abilities of the particular class. In the incidental treatment, the teacher (1) calls attention to the need for the new device by emphasizing the relation to clarity of expression, (2) sets models or directs attention to models in the textbook, (3) helps develop a principle or rule, and (4) possibly provides a brief practice in the form of original composition or exercises in the textbook. The teacher does not take much time for specific instruction, relying largely on the high motivation of the situation to gain vividness of impression. The children are allowed to begin writing soon, and of course the written work is checked. The following account concerns a language experience growing out of a real situation:

When a moth hatched in a third-grade room, the children wanted to invite other classes to see it. The following notice was dictated to the teacher, who wrote it on the board. It was copied and sent to two rooms.

Would you care to come to Room 15 to see our Promethea moth? It came out early this morning. If it is convenient you might come between 11 and 11:20 A.M.

Room 15

In the afternoon it was suggested that some first-grade children might like to see the moth. Rather than take time to write another note, Mary was dispatched with an oral announcement of the moth's arrival and an invitation to see it. The first-grade children were greatly interested and

expressed a desire for a cocoon of their own. The next morning one of the third-grade children suggested that, since they had two more cocoons, they might share them with the first grade. This was unanimously agreed on, and Frank was sent across the hall with a cocoon and a note:

Dear Boys and Girls,

We heard that you wanted a cocoon and so we will share with you. Here is a *Polyphemus* for your room. When it hatches may we see it?

We hope that you will enjoy it.

Sincerely  
Room 15

In the afternoon a messenger arrived with a thank-you note from the first grade:

Dear Boys and Girls,

Thank you for the cocoon. We will watch it. When the *Polyphemus* comes out, we would like you to see it.

Room 18

To some people it might seem that too much time had been given to note writing and that a very simple and relatively unimportant occurrence had been overworked. To the children, however, the hatching of their moth was the prime interest of the moment; one child described it as a miracle. They were anxious to share the experience with other children. True, the invitations and presentation could have been given by word of mouth, but in this case only one child, the messenger, would have benefited by the experience.

All through life there are repeated occasions for the writing of thank-you notes and invitations. How many adults procrastinate in these little courtesies simply because they are not quite sure of what to say or of the correct form. It would seem, then, that the earlier the training and the more abundant the experience, the better equipped these children will be for adult responsibilities in such matters.

In the longer developmental lessons, the need is recognized in the purposeful experience, and this need sets off a more or less elaborate series of training exercises. The first three steps are similar to those in the incidental treatment outlined above: calling attention to the need for the new device and its relation to clarity of expression; setting live models or directing attention to models in the textbook; and deriving from the study of models some basic understandings and principles. Following these steps, practice work is provided in the form of workout examples, recognition

exercises, proofreading exercises, dictation, and copying. The following is a typical proofreading exercise: <sup>3</sup>

In writing a joke, remember the rules for writing conversation. Write the following jokes correctly:

1. i was weighed at school today reported margery how much do you weigh asked her father nothing at all margery replied the nurse said i was four pounds under weight

2. at the supper table jerry remarked that his class at school was to have a clean-up contest a clean-up contest exclaimed his mother and you came to the table with those hands i know they are dirty mother jerry admitted but the contest doesnt start until next week

A very systematic plan used by some teachers for establishing mechanical skills consists of (1) copy work, (2) studied dictation, (3) unstudied dictation, (4) the unfinished story, and (5) independent writing. This series of graded steps is brought into use after specific needs have been revealed and may be related to an immediate activity, such as the preparation of a language booklet. Copy work is preceded by directed study of the elements of manuscript form, punctuation, sentences, and spelling. Pupils are advised to write a phrase at a time rather than a word or letter at a time. A high degree of accuracy is required. In dictation work, the teacher reads the whole paragraph while the children listen closely, and then he rereads the selection phrase by phrase. *Unstudied dictation follows. No previous preparation is given, although difficult words may be written on the board. The selections used are brief, with simple spelling and sentence structure. The unfinished-story stage provides some control of content and mechanics but introduces a measure of freedom. Independent writing involves the free use of mechanics, although naturally the compositions are checked for items under immediate study.*

**Making Mechanics Meaningful.** Either in the incidental handling or in the more systematic treatment of the developmental lesson, the teacher will endeavor to make mechanics meaningful to the child. Meaning is revealed in the demonstration of the role of mechanics in clear thinking and clear expression. Mechanics take on new significance as the child's thinking and demands for expression become more complex. Opportunities arise for developing the desired understanding of the importance of mechanics in connection with the children's composition work. The han-

<sup>3</sup> Mildred A. Dawson and Jonnie M. Miller, *Language for Daily Use, Grade Six*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1948, p. 129. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

ding of the comma serves as an illustration of meaningful procedures in the excellent treatment of this topic by Smith: \*

Apart from the heading of letters, in which the comma usually indicates an omission, and such independent expressions as *yes* or *no* and the name of the person spoken to in conversation, commas are used to clarify meaning when sentence elements are out of their usual order, to separate interrupters from the main idea, and to make clear the members of an enumeration. It is obvious that after end-of-sentence punctuation, the simple uses of the comma in dates and addresses, with *yes* and *no*, and with the name of the person spoken to in conversation will come first in the child's experience. The teacher, writing at the children's dictation, uses commas in these ways, explaining their usefulness as the pupils read back to her what she has written. From the beginning the purpose of punctuation is to help interpret meaning. Gradually, the child has occasion to enumerate: *Mary, John, and Henry came to our party. We had popcorn, cookies, and lemonade for refreshments.* Later he will be more ambitious in his enumerations. *We wrote the play, made the scenery, and acted the parts for our visitors.* In the upper grades he is using more formal enumerations still: *We have studied Mexico from three points of view: its geographical setting, its products and business enterprises, and its social customs and arts.*

Interruptions follow the same pattern of gradual maturing with thinking:

John, my cousin, came to our house for Christmas.

The gauchos, having been driven out, roamed the broad fields to the south.

My Uncle Bill, who is in the Navy Air Corps, has been around the world three times.

My Aunt Caroline, since she went to New Mexico, has sent us some colorful Indian beadwork.

In each case the purpose is to keep the main idea clear—what we are talking about and what we are saying about it—by setting off the interrupters. The two commas act as hooks by means of which to lift out whatever interrupts the main thought. It is interesting to note that the punctuation bears no relationship to the particular grammatical construction of the interrupter. It is the *fact of interruption* that creates the need for the commas.

When children grow in power to vary the order of elements in their sentences, they find increasing need for punctuation.

When we were eating, Spot snuffed around our feet.

There is danger of eating Spot if the comma is omitted. Similar problems arise in such sentences as the following:

\* M. R. Trabue and others, *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 89-90. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

By the way, I wore the costume you had when you were a clown.

Racing like a mad dog, around the corner bolted Jack.

As children mature in their ability to sense the effect of connectives, they learn the importance of the comma to make the meaning clear:

We went disguised, as Mrs. Broderick asked us to.

We met Bill and Jack at the corner, and Mary got on further down the street.

We had hoped to reach the gate to Yellowstone by night, but the flat tire made it impossible.

Growth in ability to punctuate cannot outrun the child's grasp of meaning. For example, time and again teachers labor to explain the formation of the possessive case with the apostrophe, only to find their instructions carefully followed when no possession is indicated by the meaning.

The boys' raced to town.

The light gleaming on the houses' shone in our eyes.

Meaning, the fact of possession, must be established first.

With these examples as a guide the teacher may be able to devise procedures for other items of form and mechanics.

**Discovering Pupils' Difficulties.** The developmental work incident to the introduction of a new item of form or mechanics will be adequate to serve the needs of some, perhaps many, pupils of the class; but it cannot be assumed that no further attention needs to be given to items once introduced. There is abundant evidence of the persistence of common errors. Growth in control of the mechanics of written work is a gradual process and one in which individuals vary widely. A systematic program of discovering and dealing with pupils' difficulties is necessary. The first step in such a program is discovering these difficulties.

In looking for weaknesses to be corrected, the teacher naturally concentrates on those elements of form and mechanics appropriate to his grade and class, including of necessity those items which have been taken up in preceding grades. A list of these items should be prepared and used as a check list to record individual competencies and deficiencies. The form is the familiar class record sheet.

To determine pupils' difficulties, the teacher analyzes samples of children's work from time to time, notes errors when giving individual help, and possibly gives diagnostic tests. Tests may take a variety of forms, such as dictation exercises and proofreading exercises. They should include the specific items for which the class may be held responsible. Teacher-



made tests are most likely to be adapted to the needs of the class; next in order are the tests found in textbooks; and finally, there are carefully chosen standard tests. One type of test is a letter which covers many skills, including capitals and punctuation marks. The children rewrite it. It is advisable for the teacher to keep a record of pupils' difficulties on a chart that shows both individual and class weaknesses.<sup>7</sup>

**Organization for Remedial Instruction.** It is a well-established principle that one of the most effective types of drill is corrective work applied at the point of error. This means simply that the pupils who need drill get it. The class record sheet shows the teacher the kind of corrective work needed by each pupil. Each pupil, also, should have a record of his own competencies and deficiencies. Students needing the same type of corrective work are brought together for work on a particular difficulty; the class is regrouped for each specific difficulty. The necessary instruction, including oral instruction by the teacher and study of textbook material, is given; and practice exercises are assigned. Soon after the completion of a given amount of practice work, a test may be given or compositions checked to see whether the difficulty has been corrected. Records of progress are kept by the teacher on the class record chart and by the pupil on his own goal sheet. This procedure in itself provides a powerful incentive for corrective work.

Work sheets are provided for each difficulty, in the completely individualized handling of corrective work. Since the teacher has little time for each child, the sheets contain a minimum of printed instructions. Work sheets are designed to be self-instructional and self-checking. A test ordinarily follows individual practice, and records of progress are kept.

**Procedures in Remedial Instruction.** Generally, procedures in remedial instruction follow the steps used in developmental lessons, as outlined above. It should be emphasized that the child with a mechanical difficulty frequently needs instruction, not only practice. The assignment of practice exercises often fails to get at the root of the difficulty, a faulty comprehension of the basic principle of usage.

In the reteaching, attention should be given to the right and wrong forms; the contrast between the ambiguity or confusion resulting from the wrong form and the clarity of the right one demonstrates the reason for the latter. Examples of the right form are to be clearly and vividly presented, and of course practice must be provided.

<sup>7</sup> Jess S. Hudson and others, *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, p. 377.

*Practice exercises may involve (1) choice of construction, where several forms are given and the child chooses and sometimes writes the best; (2) proofreading of prepared material, in which corrections are made or copied in correct form; (3) writing from dictation; and (4) original writing, in which designated forms are used.*

#### *Example of a Remedial-practice Lesson, Upper Grade*

##### *Situation*

In a social studies lesson the parks of California were discussed. Possibilities of obtaining pictures and pamphlets of the parks were also discussed, and important names were written on the board. The class was divided into groups, each assigned a particular park about which material was to be procured. In a preceding lesson, first drafts of the letters were written.

##### *Lesson*

Correction of first drafts of letters; drill on capitalization; rewriting of letters.

##### *Objective*

Correct use of capitals.

##### *Procedure*

1. "Today we are making the final drafts of letters. In going over the first drafts I found some mistakes. A large proportion of the mistakes were individual ones and can be corrected individually. There was one kind of mistake, however, that was rather general—the use of capital letters. We should have special preparation to correct these mistakes on our last drafts.
2. "I shall pass out some work sheets that will help us. Notice that the work sheet contains a rule and an example for each use of a capital letter. There are five rules covering the common mistakes. First, study the rule and the example. If you do not understand, I will help you. When you have studied the rule and example, you may write an original sentence of your own.
3. "First drafts of letters will be returned together with clean sheets of paper. Before beginning new drafts, correct errors in your first drafts. If you do not know how to correct them, let me help you. Look for other errors. Be reasonably sure you are prepared to make a perfect copy before making the final copy. If in doubt, ask for help.
4. "When you have finished your new draft, look it over for mistakes. Correct them. Ask questions if in doubt.
5. "Fold letters per directions; address envelopes or practice addressing on slips of paper."
6. Letters are collected according to park groups.
7. Best letters are revised and checked by groups acting as committees.

##### *Individualization*

"Donald should have a dictionary notebook for use in spelling."

**Materials.** A casual examination of language textbooks will show that they are not designed for the individualized grouping procedures which authorities assert must be used in the effective handling of the mechanics of writing, particularly in the remedial phases. They are planned for a whole-class procedure with occasional extra work for the more capable children and some extra practice exercises for the slow learners. To carry on a thoroughgoing type of group or individual work the teacher must adapt the material at hand and possibly provide supplementary material. Kinds of material needed are instructional, that is, practice exercises and explanations and examples of the form of new mechanics.

The most readily available material is found in textbooks. If the textbook is not followed page by page, and if adjustments in assignments are not required to meet individual needs, the teacher should prepare an analysis of the material in the text, listing by topics—such as the use of the comma in a series—those pages on which instructions, study examples, and practice exercises are provided. It is possible, of course, that the textbook provides a sufficiently detailed index, but probably it does not. The complete index, covering all essential mechanics, may be inserted in the textbooks or placed in a language notebook for reference. The teacher may prepare separate work sheets for each skill, listing material from the class textbook and from other sources—supplementary texts, workbooks, and teacher-made exercises—on a single sheet. These can be passed out by the teacher in making assignments, or the children can secure them from a convenient filing cabinet at the teacher's direction.

A source of material outside the regular text is found in workbooks and in supplementary textbooks. This material could be indexed and handled in the same way as the class textbook material. Supplementary material should be selected carefully; much of it is not usable. Individual copies of a good workbook should be supplied for each child when money is available. If individual workbooks cannot be provided, a reasonably satisfactory alternative may be adopted. Several copies of the workbook may be secured and the desired pages torn out and mounted on stiff durable paper. Answer keys for the practice exercises should be provided and possibly attached to each work sheet. The material is then filed by topics and housed in a place where it is accessible to teacher and pupils. The children do not write on the exercise sheets, but do their work on another sheet of paper.

It would be decidedly helpful, also, if the teacher were to prepare check-out tests for each topic or for a group of related topics. These tests can be duplicated and conveniently filed.

Material of the types described above requires time-consuming prepara-

tion, but it is essential in any corrective individual-group work that is to be corrective. However, the material is relatively permanent and may be accumulated gradually.

**Handling Errors in Written Work.** One important topic remains to round out a program for teaching form and mechanics: the handling of errors in written work, or proofreading. Experts agree that the only correction that has any considerable value is self-correction. It is assumed that in the development phases of a new topic the child acquires definite ideas of correct form; models are studied, examples prepared from original work, and principles and rules noted. The child acquires clear ideas of form and uses correct form in practice exercises. Yet in the absorption of original composition lapses occur. These may be due to carelessness or to faulty learning in either the understanding or the practice stage. If errors are due to faulty understanding, the teacher may make note of the fact and set up a separate corrective lesson; if they are due to carelessness or to imperfect mastery, the errors may be corrected incidentally.

Following are samples of a fourth grader's work before and after self-correction:

In are mural we are showing the Indian butts witch the Indian use for sleeging and storage. I an showing them cooking meat over the fire. A woman is getting water from the river.

In our mural we are showing the Indian huts, which the Indians used for sleeping and storage. I am showing a woman cooking meat over the fire. Another woman is getting water from the river.

Proofreading of original compositions should become a well-established habit. Emphasis in the first draft of a composition should be on content, organization of ideas, vividness, and fluency. Research shows that better compositions are produced in this way. Thought is primarily important; but form is important too as a means of observing the conventions and saying just what one wants to say. The composition should be checked, edited, and revised. Chance errors may become habitual if neglected.

As aids to the children in proofreading their own compositions, the teacher may well set up a set of standards, models, or style sheets. Children need such specific aids. The procedure recommended by Pooley for use in the high school is applicable with modification in lower grades. He says: \*

A carefully worked out technique of proof-reading can do a great deal to improve standards of written work and correctness in composition. For some

\* R. C. Pooley, *Teaching English Usage*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1946, pp. 232-233. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

reason it is very difficult to get students to reread their own work with a critical and corrective eye. The best procedure is one which is worked out with the group as a whole. When a set of compositions is ready to be handed in, the teacher should follow an accepted procedure of proof-reading. The first step is to check the title of the paper, to make sure that it is correctly placed on the paper, has capital letters where capital letters are required, and that it is correctly punctuated. The next step is to scan the paper for paragraph form. Each paragraph should be properly indented; the first sentence in the paragraph should naturally begin with a capital letter; and there should be some kind of break in the composition to show the changes of thought. The next stage is to check the whole paper for accuracy in spelling and then for accuracy in word usage. Pupils that are dubious of the acceptability of certain phrases, or are unsure of the idiom they have employed should ask help of the teacher before handing the paper in. In some cases it may be advisable to have the papers read over by a fellow-student after the writer has made his corrections as a kind of double check on accuracy. This proof-reading if followed without fail at the time each paper is to be handed in will have a vigorous effect, first in getting pupils to give their own papers a correction before they are handed in and an attitude of respect for correctness and accuracy in all work.

One of the most effective aids to self-correction is the class correction of common errors. The teacher must make a preliminary examination of the compositions or observe difficulties as he supervises the pupils during their writing. Sentences from the children's work are written on the board, and class criticism and correction are invited. After the common errors are treated in this way, the children turn to their own compositions. The teacher naturally helps with individual difficulties.

If the teacher still feels some compulsion to red-ink children's compositions, he may simply indicate the place where an error occurs, leaving to the child the burden of making the correction.

Recopying probably has little value as a learning exercise. It is usually done mechanically, without thinking. The same amount of time is more profitably spent on original writing. Of course, recopying is justifiable if it has a purpose, such as the preparation of an important letter for mailing.

It is possible that a child plagued with particular types of errors might find a personal stylebook useful.

## EXERCISES

1. Make a list of forms and mechanics appropriate to a particular class. Consider textbook, course of study, and needs of the pupils.
2. Plan a class developmental lesson for a new phase of work needed by a class.
3. Make an inventory of pupils' difficulties on a class record sheet.

4. Plan a remedial lesson for a particular group of children.
5. Begin assembling material for individual-group work on particular difficulties.
6. What purposes are served by the several items of form and mechanics?
7. How can the purposes served by form and mechanics be made clear to children?
8. Examine several samples of children's written work and evaluate in terms of thought and mechanics. How would improved mechanics enhance the expression of ideas?
9. Examine and report contents relating to form and mechanics in a language book or workbook. How could the material be used?

## REFERENCES

- Broening, Angela M., and others: *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, pp. 7, 180-184, 318-321.
- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, pp. 61-63.
- : *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, pp. 228-229.
- and Frieda H. Dingee: *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 48-49, 53-56.
- Developing Children's Power of Self-expression through Writing*, Board of Education, City of New York, 1952, chap. 4.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, chaps. 15-16.
- Hatfield, W. W.: "Shortest Road to Sentence Sense," *Elementary English*, May, 1956, 33:270-273.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp. 376-382.
- Lyman, R. L.: *Summary of Investigations Relating to Grammar, Language, and Composition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1929, pp. 82-105.
- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, pp. 257-284, 321-324.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, pp. 93-95, 286-287, 324.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 226, 240-241.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, pp. 279-282, 319-321, 363-365.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 88-91, 169-171, 209-214.

nantly formal program. In this chapter the formal program is presented first in a consideration of the work as most teachers handle it; the functional-individualized program is taken up later in the chapter as a possibly desirable goal for master teachers.

One should hasten to say that the prevailing aim in all modern programs of spelling is to assist the children in writing (a functional point of view). The several programs vary in the means employed to reach this end, involving at times compromises between ideal and realistic learning conditions; but the end sought is the same.

**Modern Textbooks.** In common practice, the program of work in spelling centers in a spelling book. The teacher should acquaint himself with the textbook, critically appraise it, and learn how to use it effectively. Modern textbooks and workbooks include all or some of the following features: (1) a basic vocabulary of words; (2) a grading of words; (3) a grouping of words into units or lessons; (4) provision for the review of hard words; (5) a cycle plan for teaching, study, and testing; (6) a plan for study; (7) study exercises; and (8) tests and possibly norms.

The basic vocabulary provided by a modern speller is likely to include the words used most commonly by children and adults in spontaneous writing, as determined by extensive investigation. Words commonly used are not numerous—about four thousand. Breed, reporting the results of several investigations, states that 2,500 words constituted 96.7 per cent of all words used by adults; 59.7 per cent of the words in adult and children's lists were common to both; 2,437 words in the total list of words used by children were not found in adult life because they related to school, stories, home conduct, play, etc.; 1,791 words found only in adult lists were derived from forms common to both lists; adult lists included many words from business, the professions, and social and political fields. Breed proposes the inclusion in spellers of the words common to both children and adults and those unusually frequent in either list.<sup>2</sup> A more recent analysis of the results of research on the writing vocabularies of children and adults by Fitzgerald lists 2,650 words. He believes that the average child should be able to master 3,500 words by the end of the elementary school period.<sup>3</sup>

The grading of words is based primarily on frequency of use by children in the several grades and secondarily on difficulty. Grading is more difficult than preparing total word lists, and the personal opinions of text-

<sup>2</sup> F. S. Breed, *How to Teach Spelling*, F. A. Owen Publishing Company, New York, 1930, pp. 9ff.

<sup>3</sup> James A. Fitzgerald, *A Basic Life Spelling Vocabulary*, The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, 1951.

book writers are likely to play a more prominent part in grading than in word selection. The extreme variability of individual children's writing vocabularies, a variability that increases through the grades, is a complicating factor.

Words in a particular lesson or unit may be placed there by chance, following no principle of grouping; they may be grouped according to some principle of word form or spelling difficulty; or they may be divided according to meaning (topic or context). The pattern of combinations in the textbook should be observed, since each requires adjustments in teaching. Modern practice is moving from chance arrangement to some kind of grouping as a means of facilitating learning. Words may be listed according to similar parts and roots or according to similar spelling difficulties. The practice of grouping by form or spelling difficulty minimizes the factor of meaning and is therefore distasteful to those who take the functional point of view. The functionalists favor grouping by meaning, preferably in context and in connected paragraphs rather than in disconnected sentences. Contextual presentation presumably presents words as they are likely to be used and seems consistent with trends in language teaching. There is some evidence in controlled studies of the superiority of contextual presentation, but there is evidence also of the superiority of single-word study. The results to date are inconclusive.\*

In a modern speller, provision is made for the systematic, periodic review of words previously studied, and hard words reappear in lists with frequency proportionate to difficulty. In addition, children are encouraged and directed in keeping individual study lists made up of words with which they have difficulty.

Modern practice favors some form of testing procedure as a basis for study. This practice naturally recognizes the extreme variability in the difficulty of words and the variability of individuals in ability to spell the words of a list. The testing procedure reveals to teacher and pupils the hard words and those on which each pupil needs to concentrate. There is considerable variability in the patterns of lessons. In the test-study-test procedure, the preliminary test is a sight test; the children then study the words missed, with or without the direction of the teacher; after study, continuing through several days, the children take a checkup test. In the teach-study-test-study-test procedure, the teacher presents the new list of words to the class; the children study; the midweek test shows words learned and words needing further attention; time is allowed for further study; and finally the cycle is completed by a checkup test. There are

\* Shane, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53.



graph form. Tests and records serve as one form of motivation. The former may cover material studied over longer periods, such as six-week periods and terms. If norms are provided, it is possible to compare the achievement of one class with that of the other classes. Test results must be interpreted, of course, in terms of all known facts about the class, including aptitude and previous scholarship.

**Adapting Word Lists.** After familiarizing himself with the main provisions of the text, a teacher should proceed to the consideration of how to use the book to get the best results. The mechanical precision of the modern textbook may tempt the teacher to adopt a mechanical program of work, making assignments and testing results. This is a clear evasion of responsibility. No textbook is designed to meet the needs of all classes and of all pupils in the class; a textbook is not sufficient in itself. Authors caution that there must be much *teaching* of spelling by the teacher. One problem is adjusting word lists to meet the needs of the class.

The speller is designed to be used in widely varying areas and is based on a mythical average class. The teacher works with a particular class, usually deviating in various degrees from the average. In the first place, the teacher should examine the word lists to eliminate words that are not useful to the class. The prevailing tendency to include words in children's lists that are used only by adults poses a problem. Time spent on these words has doubtful value; the cold-storage principle is not a valid one. Adult words may be postponed for study in later grades or even left to be acquired as needed in adult life. In the second place, the teacher will face the need of supplementing the basic word lists with words that appear frequently in children's writing but do not appear in conventional lists, such as *pal*, *chum*, *gang*, *pop*, *bike*.<sup>\*</sup> Other words to be added are those which are peculiar to the local community and some that have temporary value. The need for the temporarily used words appears in connection with work in other subjects, particularly in the social studies. Only words of permanent value should be memorized; other words, such as proper names, may be placed on a chart for reference by the children. Spellers commonly contain an alphabetical list of the basic vocabulary to which the teacher may refer in selecting words for memorization.

an alphabetized notebook can be used for this purpose. In the second grade the word box is usable. It is necessary for the teacher to give some help in preparing the list and training children in individual study procedures. Such procedures will be described more fully later in the chapter.

**Grading Spellers.** In the teaching of reading, it is recognized that children vary widely in ability, and reading books are selected to meet the needs of children at different levels of ability; it is not assumed that all children should use the same books. Differences are great also in spelling. Hildreth reports: \*

The extent of individual differences in spelling is well illustrated by the performances of pupils in one excellent school on the Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale, which includes words ranging in difficulty from the first to the eighth grade or higher. Form 3 of this test was given to all the pupils at the middle of the term in grades III thru VI. The results showed that the pupils in grade III ranged in spelling score from the first through the fourth-grade level, or from 1 to 26 words spelled correctly, with a middle score of 22 words. In grade IV the range was from 11 to 43 words spelled correctly, or from the middle of the second grade to the ninth grade, with a middle score of 22 words. In grade V the scores varied from 17 to 46 words, or from the middle of the third grade to the tenth grade in difficulty, with a middle score of 28 words. In grade VI the children spelled correctly from 20 to 49 words (a perfect score is 50), which was equivalent to a grade range from just below the fourth grade to the senior high school, and the middle score was 34 words. The variability within a single grade increased steadily from the third grade through the sixth.

A list of twenty words was dictated to a sixth-grade class of thirty-two pupils as a sight test with the results shown in Table 14-1. The number of words spelled correctly varies from 2 to 20, as shown in the distribution in Table 14-2. The significance of the range becomes apparent when the scores of the same pupils on a standard test are considered. The test used was the Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale, list 4.<sup>2</sup> The distribution of the pupils in grade levels is given in Table 14-3. The range is from 2.6 to 8.8. The variability is comparable to that in the Hildreth report.

In spite of everything we know about the range of spelling abilities, we commonly continue to require all children in a grade to use the same book. It would seem logical to adjust books to ability in spelling, as we do in reading. When is a speller properly graded? An end-of-the-term achievement of 90 to 95 per cent on a list of words selected at random from the term's work seems reasonable. It would be worthwhile for a teacher to

\* Jess S. Hudson and others, *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp. 477-478. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

<sup>2</sup> *Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1923.

graph form. Tests and records serve as one form of motivation. The former may cover material studied over longer periods, such as six-week periods and terms. If norms are provided, it is possible to compare the achievement of one class with that of the other classes. Test results must be interpreted, of course, in terms of all known facts about the class, including aptitude and previous scholarship.

**Adapting Word Lists.** After familiarizing himself with the main provisions of the text, a teacher should proceed to the consideration of how to use the book to get the best results. The mechanical precision of the modern textbook may tempt the teacher to adopt a mechanical program of work, making assignments and testing results. This is a clear evasion of responsibility. No textbook is designed to meet the needs of all classes and of all pupils in the class; a textbook is not sufficient in itself. Authors caution that there must be much *teaching* of spelling by the teacher. One problem is adjusting word lists to meet the needs of the class.

The speller is designed to be used in widely varying areas and is based on a mythical average class. The teacher works with a particular class, usually deviating in various degrees from the average. In the first place, the teacher should examine the word lists to eliminate words that are not useful to the class. The prevailing tendency to include words in children's lists that are used only by adults poses a problem. Time spent on these words has doubtful value; the cold-storage principle is not a valid one. Adult words may be postponed for study in later grades or even left to be acquired as needed in adult life. In the second place, the teacher will face the need of supplementing the basic word lists with words that appear frequently in children's writing but do not appear in conventional lists, such as *pal*, *chum*, *gang*, *pop*, *bike*.<sup>5</sup> Other words to be added are those which are peculiar to the local community and some that have temporary value. The need for the temporarily used words appears in connection with work in other subjects, particularly in the social studies. Only words of permanent value should be memorized; other words, such as proper names, may be placed on a chart for reference by the children. Spellers commonly contain an alphabetical list of the basic vocabulary to which the teacher may refer in selecting words for memorization.

Any realistic program should make provision, also, for each child's adding to his study list words peculiar to his needs. It is quite practicable for children to keep an individualized, supplementary list of words which they have occasion to use in writing activities. From the third grade on,

<sup>5</sup> Gertrude Hildreth, *Learning the Three R's*, Educational Publishers, Inc., Minneapolis, 1947, p. 494.

Table 14.2. Distribution of Sixth-grade Pupils on a Sight Spelling Test  
(Number and per cent right)

<i>Words right</i>	<i>Per cent right</i>	<i>Number of pupils</i>
2	10	1
3	15	1
4	20	2
5	25	0
6	30	3
7	35	0
8	40	0
9	45	2
10	50	2
11	55	2
12	60	3
13	65	0
14	70	0
15	75	1
16	80	3
17	85	3
18	90	4
19	95	3
20	100	2

Table 14.3. Distribution of Sixth-grade Pupils by Grade Norms on a  
Morrison-McColl Spelling Scale Test

<i>Grade norms</i>	<i>Number of pupils</i>	<i>Grade norms</i>	<i>Number of pupils</i>
2.6-2.7	1	5.8-5.9	1
2.8-2.9	2	6.0-6.1	0
3.0-3.1	0	6.2-6.3	3
3.2-3.3	0	6.4-6.5	3
3.4-3.5	1	6.6-6.7	1
3.6-3.7	1	6.8-6.9	0
3.8-3.9	3	7.0-7.1	0
4.0-4.1	1	7.2-7.3	0
4.2-4.3	0	7.4-7.5	1
4.4-4.5	2	7.6-7.7	1
4.6-4.7	2	7.8-7.9	0
4.8-4.9	3	8.0-8.1	0
5.0-5.1	0	8.2-8.3	0
5.2-5.3	3	8.4-8.5	0
5.4-5.5	1	8.6-8.7	0
5.6-5.7	1	8.8-8.9	1

Table 14-1. Sixth-grade Pupils' Scores on a Sight Test  
(Crosses indicate words missed)

Words	Pupils																																No. words right (each pupil)	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32		
hawk																																		28
turtle																																		20
joint																																		25
fruit																																		12
hard																																		17
swallow																																		20
shallow																																		24
freedom																																		23
pretend																																		26
moment																																		24
swamp																																		26
edge																																		27
edge																																		24
drawn																																		14
mere																																		16
fled																																		26
harm																																		13
cease																																		9
deceive																																		16
frighten																																		
No. words right (each pupil)	20	20	19	19	18	18	18	18	17	17	17	16	16	16	16	15	12	12	12	11	10	10	9	9	6	6	6	4	4	3	2			

**Presenting a New List of Words.** This involves teacher-directed study, which precedes individual study or practice in connection with new words. Here the teacher *teaches* spelling, and teaching is distinguished from assigning lessons. The same procedure is followed in presenting a new list to the class as a whole, to groups, and to individuals in so far as the teacher has time to give individual instruction.

The teacher directs the children through the several steps as outlined in the study procedure described above, with emphasis on the various phases as determined by the words and by the needs of the children. He first takes up the pronunciation and meaning of the whole word. Pronunciation and meaning of most words should not present serious difficulties because words commonly used in writing are those commonly used in speaking and reading for many years prior to writing. Exceptions are words that are commonly mispronounced or confused in meaning. Special attention is required for words of the first type, such as *athletic*, *library*, *chumney*, *often*, *which*. The teacher pronounces the word, calling attention to the difficult part; the children then pronounce it several times. Words commonly confused in meaning are the homonyms, such as *their*, *there*; *to*, *two*, *too*; *principal*, *principle*. These words are best presented and studied in phrases. Time spent on using homonyms and other words in sentences is certainly not wasted.

In the second phase of presentation, *sounding-seeing*, the word is written on the board and pronounced, and the sound-sight of each syllable or larger phonogrammic unit is noted. The unit of learning is the syllable or larger phonogrammic part, not the letter. The children should note whether the word parts are spelled as they are sounded; they should recognize the familiar parts and concentrate attention on the unphonetic, hard parts. Certain difficulties will soon stand out: confusing vowel sounds, silent letters, strange consonant combinations. The difficulty is emphasized by talking about it, looking at it, and possibly underlining or checking it. Comparisons may be made with similar parts in other words; sometimes helpful associations can be made, such as *piece*, *pie*; *principal*, *pal*; *principle*, *rule*; *there*, *here*.

Sounding-seeing leads immediately to the third phase, visualization. The child says the word to himself with eyes closed or averted and simultaneously tries to "see" it. He checks his visual imagery by again looking at the word.

Now he is ready to write. This important phase strengthens visualization and gives the child the kinetic sense of writing the word. Of course, the first writing should be checked.

give a preliminary test early in the term of words selected at random from the term's work and to compare scores for individual pupils on the initial test with scores on a similar test given at the end of the term. He may determine what degree of familiarity with the words of a text is required to assure reasonable mastery by the end of the term. As a working hypothesis, the authors suggest that scores of 40 to 70 per cent right on the preliminary test indicate readiness for the text, that scores of 70 to 90 per cent indicate the textbook is too easy and a more advanced book should be tried, and that scores below 40 per cent show that the text is too hard and an easier one should be used. There may still remain a pupil or two at either extreme for whom an individualized program of work is advisable. If this criterion were applied to the sixth-grade class reported in Table 14-2, only nine of the children would be properly placed in the sixth-grade book; seven would be placed in lower-grade books; and sixteen would be placed in higher-grade books.

**Organization of Instruction.** If different spellers are used in a class, as suggested in the preceding section, it is obvious that a grouping procedure must be followed. If a single speller is used, the necessity of adjustments to meet individual needs must be equally apparent. In using a single speller a combination of class, group, and/or individual work is in order. Testing may be done with the whole class, and possibly the whole class may profit from a preliminary class study of the word list, as described in a later section. Certainly study must be individualized or organized by groups and directed by the teacher. The superiority of directed study over individual study is established by experiments.

Various procedures for grouping may be used. One is to divide the class into three groups on the basis of the term pretest. The best group—consisting of those pupils who miss not more than four words of a week's list—work by themselves, turning to some other subject when they have completed the study of the words missed on the pretest. The middle group—those who miss four to ten words—receive a minimum of help from the teacher, consisting of assistance in word analysis and suggestions for study. The low group—those who miss more than ten words—work under the close direction of the teacher; a few of the words missed may be selected for each day's study, detailed analysis of words made, difficulties noted, study directed through the several steps, and individual help given. All children should take the final comprehensive check on the unit or week's work.\*

\* Mildred A. Dawson, *Teaching Language in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1931, p. 239.

As a final step, writing the word several times fixes the spelling in mind and hand.

The painstaking treatment of new words described in the preceding paragraphs should be saved for those words causing real difficulty. Easy words are disposed of quickly. The teacher checks the pretest to determine difficulties and records in his textbook for future use the hard words and particular parts that cause trouble.

**Rules and Generalizations.** In the directed study of new words described in the preceding section, occasion will arise for dealing with words that are similar in form. Comparisons will be made and certain principles will be developed in the form of generalizations. These generalizations have some value in that they fix in mind the spelling of a new word and provide means of checking spelling. Generalizations take shape gradually and finally reach definite formulation in the upper grades. They are not a chief reliance for learning spelling. The value of a particular rule depends upon range of application and variability. The number of usable rules is not large. The following may be helpful:

1. Words ending in final *e* drop the *e* when adding a suffix beginning with a vowel and keep the *e* when adding a suffix beginning with a consonant.
2. Words ending in *y* preceded by a consonant change *y* to *i* when adding any suffix except one beginning with *i*; but words ending in *y* preceded by a vowel remain unchanged when adding any suffix.
3. Monosyllables, and words of more than one syllable with the accent on the last syllable, which end in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel double the final consonant when adding a suffix beginning with a vowel.
4. In diphthongs, *i* comes before *e* except after *c* or when sounded as *a*, as in *neighbor* or *weigh*.

**Directing Practice.** Practice is an important phase of word mastery. It is commonly handled as independent study, to some extent supervised and checked by the teacher, because the instructor feels that his limited time can be spent better on the developmental phases of the work. It should be clear that, in the authors' opinion, practice should be preceded by careful presentation in the form of word analysis and guidance in study. The suggestions of the teacher for the study of particular words should be followed by pupils' practice, such as emphasis on the pronunciation of certain words, concentration on hard parts, and comparison of words that are spelled alike. The importance of care in handwriting should be stressed.

Practice commonly takes the form of writing the word a number of times. Possibly second in favor is using the word in sentences. A considerable variety of other exercises is possible. The preparation of practice exercises takes time, and the teacher probably will continue to rely largely



Gradually, as the child's spelling-writing vocabulary grows through use and confidence in written expression increases, the urge for original work appears. The teacher provides assistance in spelling and other mechanics. A device that has been used successfully is to have each pupil keep an alphabetized vocabulary box with words written on slips of paper about 3 by 8 inches. When a pupil asks for help on a word, the teacher writes the word for him on a slip of paper. The pupil studies it, uses it in his composition, and files it in his box for future use. The children are trained in a learning procedure: watching the teacher write the word, studying, tracing, copying (or, better, writing from memory), checking, and using.

The teacher is warned not to be too critical of spelling errors in the writing of young children. Hildreth says: <sup>10</sup>

Teachers tend too frequently to be oversensitive to spelling errors in the writing of young children, and, as in arithmetic and reading, demand standards of accomplishment too high for young children, forgetting that considerable improvement is the invariable accomplishment of maturity and insight on the part of the child. As Suzzallo suggested, the children are growing in spelling, not grown.

Beginnings in spelling must be recognized even when the spelling is not precisely correct: "movd" for "moved," "aple" for "apple," "dol" for "doll." The child demonstrates that he has made a successful beginning when he can write from memory no more than the correct initial letters of words. This is the first step beyond having no idea whatsoever of the spelling of a word. Even such spellings as "gellie" for "jelly," "doler" for "dollar," "frend" for "friend," "mach" for "match," "braset" for "bracelet" are not far from right, for the number of letters in each word is approximately correct and the syllables are indicated. These errors are not as serious when young children make them as the random spelling of these words would be.

The point is not that the school encourages partially correct spelling or teaches children to spell as they please, but that 100 per cent precision is not acquired all at once in spelling any more than in a child's early efforts to speak. These first partial learnings represent the first stage in the long developmental process of learning to spell correctly. The pupil is closely observed to make sure that he is progressing in spelling right along.

This informal approach to building up a writing vocabulary may be supplemented by a systematic program beginning with the second grade, where either a basic list of words used commonly by children is compiled from the teacher's observations of their needs, or recommended word lists are utilized. There is a definite, well-organized attack, following the general procedures of teaching outlined above for developmental work and for review; and at the same time care is taken to help children acquire useful learning techniques for the mastery of new words.

<sup>10</sup> Hildreth, *op cit.*, p. 504.

**Spelling in Written Work.** Word mastery is not accomplished by limiting attention to the spelling of words in special lessons; attention to spelling must be given consistently in all written work. Carelessness is a source of troublesome errors. The pupil should note spelling as part of the proof-reading of written work. Words about which he is doubtful should be checked with the teacher or looked up in the vocabulary list or dictionary and should be corrected before a final draft is made.

If attention to spelling seems to interfere with freedom of expression in creative writing, the teacher may permit writing part of a word for identification and later give the pupil the necessary assistance. It is understood that this compromise is made in the interest of free expression and does not absolve the pupil from responsibility for the spelling of words within his normal vocabulary.

Spelling consciousness is strengthened by the occasional exercise of checking all words in a composition. The pupil checks the words that are known to be right, marks with an *x* those known to be wrong, and marks with a question mark those about which he is doubtful. Such checking of judgments should be illuminating to the pupil and the teacher, and may possibly reveal some misspellings that have become habitual.

**Beginning Spelling.** Ordinarily textbook work in spelling is not introduced before the third grade; the teachers in the first two grades are required to improvise a spelling program, possibly using as guides desk copies of textbooks or workbooks. The work in the first two grades is commonly informal and related to purposeful writing. Before beginning work on original compositions the teacher naturally assures herself that the children are ready.\* Readiness consists of an adequate background of personal experiences and of training in thinking, expressing ideas orally in simple language forms, and reading. The observation of the written forms of words and sentences, such as compositions written on the board by the teacher (possibly at the dictation of the children), is helpful preparation for the children. Early occasions for writing are signing names to papers, writing labels, and copying from the blackboard simple class compositions such as invitations for mothers to a class party.

In approaching a writing activity, the teacher demonstrates and explains the correct form and conducts a brief practice exercise. The problem is as much a handwriting lesson as a spelling lesson. The letters are identified and named; the forms are learned by the children as they take up the letter groups found in particular words. Instruction and practice on specific letter forms are given as needed.

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 203-204.

number, some 3,000 to 4,000 carry the writing burden for the majority of children in the upper grades."<sup>13</sup>

These considerations, together with the fact of extreme variability in individual spelling ability, suggest to Hildreth the need for a *practical* rather than an *academic* program of work. However, the work is not to be entirely individualized. She says: "

Teachers set aside time every day in the week for all pupils who need to study the words in their spelling notebooks, or words checked in their spelling word lists. Periods once or twice a week are not frequent enough for economical learning and retention. In addition to checking spelling accuracy in written work, this daily work includes a short period for the initial study or review of troublesome words. These periods need not be more than ten or fifteen minutes long. Pupils far ahead of the majority of the group would be working on compositions or other activities during the test and study periods. The danger in any predetermined program is that it will become mechanical. The week's work for every child should be individualized so far as his needs require.

Class or group work is presumably used in teaching the basic vocabulary of some 2,000 words. Apparently each child builds up his own spelling list as needs for words arise in writing activities. The particular techniques for handling these individualized word lists are not given by Hildreth; evidently they are left to the teacher. Spelling is not to occupy more than ten or fifteen minutes per day.

The functional-individualized program must be recognized as theoretically sound, although practical difficulty arises with the handling of individual word lists. Certain weaknesses have been pointed out in the formal program; some of these faults can be corrected by the measures suggested. The differences between the two programs—formal and functional-individual—are in large part differences in relative emphasis on class and on individual work. Possibly a sound, practical program could result from combining key features of both programs.

**Chronically Bad Spellers.** The chronically bad speller represents the lower extreme of the total distribution. There is no evidence to show that the majority of these poor spellers differ from other children in essential abilities or that they learn spelling in different ways. The instructional procedure is essentially the same as for normal spellers; more intensive work is required, and a slower pace is set. The teacher may probe into the pedagogical history of the child and make a thorough examination of

<sup>13</sup> Hildreth, *op cit.*, p. 493.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 524.

The emphasis is on the basic words of assured utility—words that children have occasion to use daily. Two new words per day are sufficient, and frequent repetition is desirable. The procedure is essentially a teacher-directed, class or group study procedure.

**The Functional-Individualized Program.** The compound adjective *functional-individualized* describes the program which we shall now discuss in contrast to what is commonly called *individual* instruction in spelling. This is frankly a more formal program. It is, perhaps, overconservative and does not present an ideal procedure for the teaching of spelling; but possibly it comes as close to the ideal as the realities of instruction will generally permit.

In the usual type of *individual* work, all pupils study the same words; individualization consists of concentration on work missed in pretests and in individual study and progress. This second program is certainly not functional in the sense of relating immediately to writing.

Hildreth makes a good case for the functional program. Her point of view is well expressed in the following comments:<sup>11</sup>

In the modern school program, spelling is treated wholly as a practical aid in writing. The pupil is helped to develop correct spelling habits whenever he writes something at school. Ideas to express and a vocabulary of word meanings in which to express them are prerequisites to learning to spell.

Although this position has been advocated for years, it is only recently that many schools have succeeded in organizing spelling work on a functional basis. This aim is achieved through unifying spelling with all the activities in the school day that call for context writing. Spelling is not confined to a "spelling period," but is a skill that is practiced whenever and wherever writing is done. The criterion of spelling success in modern schools is not the percentage of words the child spells correctly in a list for a given grade, or the list of words studied last week or last term, but how he spells whenever he writes.

In the modern school, spelling is taught in connection with projects and activities that give purpose to the writing the children do. The spelling vocabulary is acquired more largely through the study of standard word lists.

According to Hildreth, the modern speller is at fault in containing too many words infrequently used, such as *procrastination*, *prolong*, and *bona fide*; in arranging words according to difficulty rather than frequency of use; in omitting words peculiar to children's writing; and in including too many words.<sup>12</sup> Hildreth says, "Few words are used very often; a small

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 497-498.

<sup>12</sup> See also Henry D. Rinsland, *A Basic Vocabulary of Elementary School Children*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1945.

number, some 3,000 to 4,000 carry the writing burden for the majority of children in the upper grades."<sup>12</sup>

These considerations, together with the fact of extreme variability in individual spelling ability, suggest to Hildreth the need for a *practical* rather than an *academic* program of work. However, the work is not to be entirely individualized. She says: "<sup>13</sup>

Teachers set aside time every day in the week for all pupils who need to study the words in their spelling notebooks, or words checked in their spelling word lists. Periods once or twice a week are not frequent enough for economical learning and retention. In addition to checking spelling accuracy in written work, this daily work includes a short period for the initial study or review of troublesome words. These periods need not be more than ten or fifteen minutes long. Pupils far ahead of the majority of the group would be working on compositions or other activities during the test and study periods. The danger in any predetermined program is that it will become mechanical. The week's work for every child should be individualized so far as his needs require.

Class or group work is presumably used in teaching the basic vocabulary of some 2,000 words. Apparently each child builds up his own spelling list as needs for words arise in writing activities. The particular techniques for handling these individualized word lists are not given by Hildreth; evidently they are left to the teacher. Spelling is not to occupy more than ten or fifteen minutes per day.

The functional-individualized program must be recognized as theoretically sound, although practical difficulty arises with the handling of individual word lists. Certain weaknesses have been pointed out in the formal program; some of these faults can be corrected by the measures suggested. The differences between the two programs—formal and functional-individual—are in large part differences in relative emphasis on class and on individual work. Possibly a sound, practical program could result from combining key features of both programs.

**Chronically Bad Spellers.** The chronically bad speller represents the lower extreme of the total distribution. There is no evidence to show that the majority of these poor spellers differ from other children in essential abilities or that they learn spelling in different ways. The instructional procedure is essentially the same as for normal spellers; more intensive work is required, and a slower pace is set. The teacher may probe into the pedagogical history of the child and make a thorough examination of

<sup>12</sup> Hildreth, *op cit.*, p. 493.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 524.

physical and emotional factors to discover contributing causes. A brief summary of steps in diagnosis and treatment is presented here:<sup>18</sup>

- Give a standard spelling test to discover the amount of deficiency. Compare with achievement in other subjects.
- Give an intelligence test to discover general mental capacity.
- Test for defects of hearing and vision.
- Give reading test.
- Give test of spelling consciousness to show whether mistakes are due to carelessness or ignorance of the word.
- Collect misspellings from spelling tests and written work and classify them according to types of errors.
- Get as much information as possible about the pupil's pedagogical history, especially methods of beginning reading, knowledge of meanings of words, knowledge of phonics, pronunciation and articulation, motor coordination in writing, and emotional attitude toward spelling.
- From above, assemble probable causes of difficulty in spelling, and adopt appropriate remedial measures such as the following:
  - a. Systematic word study; early training may have been inadequate.
  - b. Exercises in visualization.
  - c. Drill on particular types of spelling errors.
  - d. Phonics drills.
  - e. Remove physical defects.
  - f. Develop confidence through successful effort.

Those who want to go into the subject more deeply may well refer to the book by Gates and Russell and the 1947 volume of Hildreth, both listed in "References" at the end of this chapter.

## EXERCISES

- 1. List the essential provision of one spelling book.
- 2. Show how you might adapt one speller to the needs of a particular class.
- 3. Give a pretest, covering a term's work, to one class. Interpret the results and suggest an appropriate plan for the organization of instruction.
- 4. Work out a procedure for introducing a new group of words to a group or class.
- 5. Suggest a practical plan—a functional-individualized program—for handling individual work, with spelling growing out of purposeful writing activities.

## REFERENCES

- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, pp. 168-170.

<sup>18</sup> William H. Burton and others, *The Supervision of Elementary Subjects*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1929, pp. 121-122.

- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chap. 5.
- : *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, pp. 198, 203-206, 233-237, 239-240.
- and Marian Zollinger: *Guiding Language Learning*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chap. 17.
- Fitzgerald, James A.: *The Teaching of Spelling*, The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, 1951.
- Gates, Arthur I., and Russell, David H.: *Diagnostic and Remedial Manual*, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, pp. 258-261.
- Herrick, Virgil E., and Leland B. Jacobs: *Children and the Language Arts*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955, chap. 11.
- Hildreth, Gertrude: *Learning the Three R's*, Educational Publishers, Inc., Minneapolis, 1947, chap. 18.
- : *Teaching Spelling. A Guide to Basic Principles and Practices*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., New York, 1955.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, chap. 6.
- Lee, J. Murray, and Dorris M. Lee: *The Child and His Curriculum*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1950, pp. 420-427.
- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, chaps. 6-9.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, pp. 94, 105-106, 260, 325-326.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 63-66, 225-226, 237-238, 287-288, 334-335.
- Russell, David H., and others: *Child Development and the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1953, pp. 20-22.
- Shane, Harold G: *Research Helps in Teaching the Language Arts*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Washington, 1955, chap. 5.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, chap. 15.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 153, 160, 212.

## Handwriting

The teaching of handwriting until quite recently, and to a considerable extent at present, has been dominated by principles and procedures promoted by specialists whose interests seemed to be in handwriting for its own sake. There has been a succession of systems—Spencerian, vertical, Palmer—varying in style, but alike in basic principles: (1) setting rigid patterns of letter forms and slant, (2) emphasizing formal drill exercises, (3) prescribing movement, and (4) requiring the use of certain materials. The purpose, apparently, was to make a fancy calligrapher of every child.

Traditional formalism is attacked by educators and teachers on several grounds (1) The methods used—postures, copy, and drill exercises—are inappropriate for children. (2) The results are artificial and there is little carry-over into actual writing in school and in life. (3) Some scripts, in spite of pleasing appearance, are difficult to read. (4) Learning to write is unnecessarily complicated. (5) The extreme emphasis on drill takes all the joy out of learning to write. (6) Emphasis on formal drill disregards the natural stages in the neuromuscular development of children. (7) Individuality of style is unnecessarily sacrificed to the fetish of uniformity. (8) In spite of years of training, children fail to acquire a free, easy handwriting movement.

Traditional practices, or the remains of traditional practices, still persist in the classroom. Many of today's teachers were trained in the old methods, and the charges are made by qualified observers that handwriting is still taught by drill methods and that the skill is often poorly taught.<sup>1</sup>

The present trend is toward a functional program which (1) defines

<sup>1</sup> Gertrude Hildreth, *Learning the Three R's*, Educational Publishers, Inc., Minneapolis, 1947, pp. 595-597. Also see Jess S. Hudson and others, *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp. 442, 460.



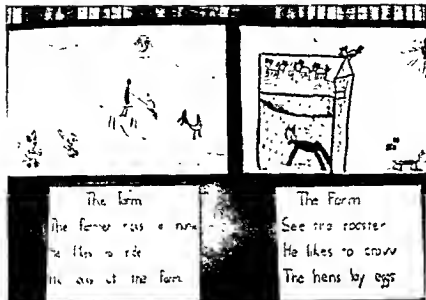


Fig. 15-1. Actual writing experiences provide motivation and some practice. (Courtesy of Hazel Lambert)

competency in terms of standards acceptable in the social and business correspondence of adults; (2) encourages individuality of style; (3) emphasizes legibility, appearance, and ease of writing; (4) eliminates formal drill and limits practice to meeting immediate, recognized needs; (5) relates handwriting to written composition; (6) favors a natural arm-hand-finger movement, adapted to age and maturity; and (7) permits the use of handwriting materials commonly used in home and the business world.

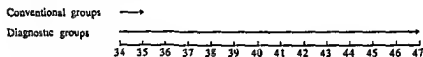
Penmanship is not isolated from work in other subjects. From the very beginning, a child has something to write and a reason for writing it. He composes real messages, reports, notes, summaries, outlines, lists, and booklets. These experiences provide both motivation and some practice in penmanship. The writing program is a functional program.

The functional approach is not to be confused with the purely incidental treatment of handwriting; systematic instruction and practice are provided. The amount of writing in school is too limited to provide sufficient practice for mastery, and for a time the child will need to turn aside from writing messages and memoranda to practicing handwriting. But this practice is closely related to the purpose it serves, and the amount of practice is determined by the end served.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Hildreth, *op. cit.*, p. 601.

The functional program, then, is a combination of purposeful writing experiences and systematic training. The precise combination is the teacher's practical problem and the burden of the remainder of the chapter.

**Can Handwriting Be Taught?** Before the development of a practical program is discussed, a pertinent question may be considered: Can handwriting be taught? The unsatisfactory results of traditional teaching and of the haphazard measures that teachers have sometimes resorted to in an effort to adjust traditional teaching to modern points of view may give rise to a feeling of hopelessness and helplessness. That handwriting can be taught is revealed clearly in several significant experiments. Cole devoted ten years to developing and trying out a system of diagnostic instruction. Results were obtained in progress made by 398 high-third-grade and low-fourth-grade children, and comparisons were made with 388 children in the same grades and schools taught by conventional methods. Pupils using the two methods were not selected, an attempt was made to equate teachers and time, and the results were scored by disinterested persons. Speed was about the same for both groups, but results in quality were markedly different. The improvement in median quality score for the conventional group was 34 to 35; for the diagnostic group, 35 to 47 (Ayes scale). The difference in improvement is more striking when viewed graphically in one-tenth steps on the Ayes scale:



These are samples of a child's writing which show average improvement during four months of diagnostic teaching:

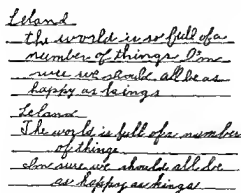


Fig. 15-1a Samples showing average progress in four months of diagnostic instruction.

According to Cole, the conventional groups improved very little, but the diagnostic groups, in less than four months, made an average improvement equal to three years at the normal rate.<sup>3</sup>

Similar results were obtained in experiments carried on by Guiler and by Pressey and Lehman. Reed reports: <sup>4</sup>

Guiler analyzed the handwriting of fourteen pupils from grade VII with Ayres Handwriting Scale. He then analyzed the individual's needs by means of Pressey's Chart for Diagnosis of Illegibilities, West's Chart for Diagnosing Elements of Handwriting, and Gray's Standard Score Card. A table was made of the difficulties in the formation of each letter. This was followed by individualized group instruction which had for its goal the correction of each individual's difficulties. During the year the class improved in quality from an average of 43.6 on the Ayres scale to an average of 56.8, and in rate from an average of 75.4 to an average of 84.6 letters a minute. This was the equivalent of a normal gain for three years. In the experiment of Pressey and Lehman a similar procedure was used. They worked with twenty-three pupils from grade IV B and used both an experimental and a control group. The two were taught by the same teacher twice a week for thirty minutes for 9.5 weeks. The experimental class increased its average score in quality from 32 to 46 on the Ayres scale, and its rate from 51 to 69. The corresponding changes for the control class were 31 to 34 in quality and from 46 to 50 in rate. Both experiments establish the fact that corrective practice applied at the point of error is effective.

**Stages in Handwriting.** For the purpose of this presentation, training in handwriting may be divided into two stages. The first stage comprises the work of the first two and one-half or three grades, in which the letter forms are taught and habits of position and of use of writing materials begin to be established. In the second stage, from the fourth or upper third grade, when familiar letter forms and habits are set, the teacher is concerned with improving skill and ease of writing. The second stage extends through the upper elementary grades and on into the junior and senior high schools. The second stage is considered first in this chapter. An attempt is made to develop a practical program consistent with the modern educational view of functional-diagnostic teaching.

**Relating Handwriting to Purposeful Experiences.** The heart of the functional program is purposeful experiences. This means, primarily, that children must have abundant opportunities to use handwriting in real situations. Typical experiences are writing business letters to request illustrative

<sup>3</sup>Hudson and others, *op. cit.*, p. 466. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

<sup>4</sup>H. B. Reed, *Psychology of Elementary School Subjects*, Ginn & Company, Boston, 1938, pp. 280-281. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

material in the social studies, writing friendly letters to sick classmates, making outlines and records of work accomplished, writing announcements and advertisements, writing plays, contributing to a newspaper or magazine, writing stories and original poetry, and preparing minutes of meetings. Most of these experiences constitute a normal part of schoolwork, curricular and extracurricular; but some are devised by the teacher to provide special opportunities for training in useful language experiences, of which handwriting is a part.

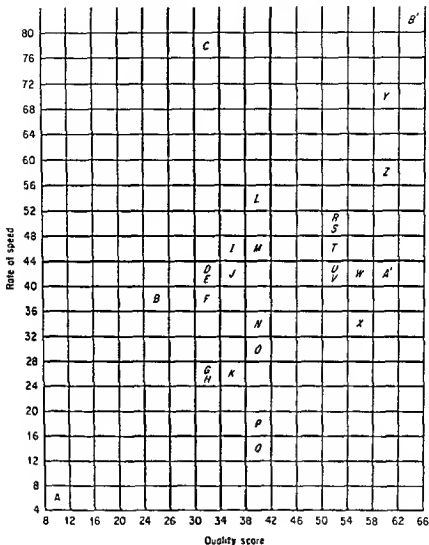
The use of writing experiences as a part of a functional program in handwriting provides purposeful situations, which in turn provide immediate motivation for good handwriting. Adequate standards are set, work is judged, careful attention is given to the use of good handwriting and to the practice of good form, difficulties are noticed, and incidental instruction and practice are given. Properly handled, much progress toward desired handwriting goals may be made in purposeful writing experiences.

**Measuring Achievements.** Incidental instruction and practice in penmanship during purposeful activities generally are not sufficient to develop desired competency in handwriting. A supplementary training program is required. The amount of training needed varies widely with individuals, and the teacher's first problem is to determine who needs the training.

A rough evaluation may be made by examining samples of children's purposeful writing and comparing the writing with acceptable standards for the grade. Or the teacher may give a standard test, such as the Ayres handwriting scale, which gives scores in quality and speed. The scores should be recorded on a scatter diagram, with identifying letters, as given in Table 15-1. Norm lines should be drawn for the grade, showing standards given on the scale. To aid further in the interpretation of results, the teacher may note on the diagram the norms for grades above and below his grade. A glance at the results gives a picture of the distribution of ability in the class and serves as a general diagnosis of needs. It will be observed that the median lines separate the class into several groups with reference to quality and speed. Each letter represents an individual child.

**Organization of Instruction.** The preliminary measurement of achievements gives at least a tentative basis for the organization of instruction. Three groups may be distinguished for instructional purposes: (1) norm or above, (2) near but below norm, and (3) seriously deficient. The children who are at or above the grade norm in quality and speed may be excused from systematic training as long as they maintain proper standards in written work, or further training may be made optional. The re-

Table 15-7. Handwriting Scores, Third-grade Class



maintaining pupils need some help; the amount and kind varies with the children. The children near the goal may be brought to the grade norm with a little carefully planned training, which should be given early in order to free the teacher for the detailed, laborious work required by the very retarded children. It is possible that those near the grade norm may be

half *n*, *t* like *l*, *t* with cross above.\* Diagnostic sheets for each letter may be made, indicating defects in formation; or commercial material may be secured for the use of teacher and children.†

**Treatment of Errors.** The exact definition of the nature of the difficulty often suggests the proper remedy, such as closing the *d*, straightening the back of the *b*, or opening the *e*. However, in the matter of treatment too, proper commercial material can help by giving specific suggestions on how to correct particular errors.

In the study-practice of a letter form the child should note the nature and cause of the difficulty, study the correct form, write words containing the letter, use the word in a sentence, use the correct form in original writing until it becomes habitual, and review as needed for maintenance of correct habits.

Keeping records of progress in mastering letter forms serves as a powerful incentive for improving handwriting.

**Grouping for Corrective Work.** The corrective work is teacher-directed. The children who have similar difficulties are taught simultaneously or individually. Both procedures have been used successfully. The choice may be dictated by the commonness of the difficulties, the availability of instructional material, and the maturity of the pupils. The authors personally favor the grouping procedure because they feel that children generally need the stimulation of companions and expert guidance of the teacher. To the authors' knowledge, satisfactory material for a completely individualized program is not generally available. Of course, extreme deviations and errors will require individual work on the part of teacher and pupil.

**Improving Speed and Quality.** Although the primary analysis and concentration of effort is on letter forms, some attention may be given profitably to speed; to qualities other than letter formation, such as alignment, spacing of words and letters, slant, and neatness; and to techniques, such as placing of the paper, position and movement of arm and hand. These elements may be handled incidentally in connection with purposeful writing and practice work on letter forms. Speed develops naturally with age and practice. Improvement in other qualities may be expected, incidental to practice on letter forms.‡

Instruction may be given directly by the teacher; suitable commercial materials may be utilized for diagnosis and remedial suggestions; or self-

\* Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

† Such as J. C. Almack and others, *New Laurel Handwriting, Teachers' Manual*, Laurel Publishers, Scranton, Pa., 1944, pp. 45-55.

‡ Hudson and others, *op. cit.*, p. 464.

help devices in the form of diagnostic work sheets may be introduced, such as the following:

### Diagnostic and Remedial Chart for Handwriting

<i>Fault</i>	<i>Remedy</i>
1. Line color:	
<i>a.</i> Too light	Hold pen nearer the point. Lessen angle of pen to paper.
<i>b.</i> Too heavy	Hold pen with eye of pen facing paper.
<i>c.</i> Shaded curves	Hold pen further from the point.
<i>d.</i> Heavy downstrokes	Hold pen with eye of pen facing paper. Lessen pressure of forefinger on pen.
2. Size:	
<i>a.</i> Irregular	Bend thumb in writing.
<i>b.</i> Too large	Use combination of finger and arm movement, holding pen nearer the point.
<i>c.</i> Too small	Combine arm with finger movement, holding pen further from the point.
3. Slant:	
<i>a.</i> Irregular	Shift paper to left, keeping writing directly in line with eye. Direct writing movement toward the center of the body.
<i>b.</i> Too slanting	Lessen slant of paper.
<i>c.</i> Lacking slant	Increase slant of paper.
4. Letter spacing:	
<i>a.</i> Irregular	Regulate slant of letters.
<i>b.</i> Crowded	Lessen slant of letters.
<i>c.</i> Scattered	Increase slant of letters.
5. Beginning and ending strokes:	
<i>a.</i> Irregular	Regulate letter size.
<i>b.</i> Too long	Make smaller letters. Lessen slant of letters.
<i>c.</i> Too short	Increase size of letters. Increase slant of letters.
6. Word spacing:	
<i>a.</i> Irregular	Make beginning and ending strokes uniform.
<i>b.</i> Crowded	Shorten beginning and ending strokes.
<i>c.</i> Scattered	Lengthen beginning and ending strokes.
7. Alignment:	
<i>a.</i> Irregular	Shift paper to left oftener, keeping writing directly in line with eyes.
<i>b.</i> Under line	Lessen slant of paper.
<i>c.</i> Over line	Increase slant of paper.

**Planning Practice Units of Work.** The plan of work implicit in the preceding discussion is an attack on separate letters in a more or less chance

order. In this plan, as used by Cole, the individual letter constitutes a unit. It is possible to group letters in some fashion such as by similarity of movement. This combination may contribute to the child's understanding of basic letter forms and may facilitate mastery of letters. Possibly investigation may show that if a child has difficulty with one letter of a group he has difficulty with others, such as *n* and *m*, *o* and *a*. Then grouping by form would have a logical and practical justification. It would simplify somewhat both diagnosis and remedial treatment. McKee thinks that letters should be introduced in terms of their difficulty and types of movement. Types of movement are overcurved, undercurved, and mixed; they suggest an order of treatment.\* Handwriting courses and workbooks commonly use such grouping. Nystrom proposes the following combinations: (1) *e, i, u, w*; (2) *s, c, r*; (3) *c, o, a*; (4) *m, n, v, x*; (5) *t, d, p*; (6) *l, b, f, h, k*; (7) *j, g, y, z, q*.

**Using Handwriting Workbooks.** Handwriting workbooks are commonly designed for class procedure; the children progress through the course together, although some incidental provisions are made for discovering and working on individual difficulties. The course usually outlines a systematic program of work in all phases; it follows the unit plan of grouping letters; and it contains provisions for presentation, diagnosis, practice, and testing, with model letters and words for practice. To the inexperienced or imperfectly trained teacher this comprehensive and ready-made program of the workbook may be extremely useful. The workbook is also useful to the teacher who attempts to carry on work at several levels simultaneously. The new word or letter form should be presented to the group in brief instructional periods. However, it must be recognized that such formal handling of writing instruction may not meet requirements of a functional-diagnostic program as described above.

Until instructional material suitable to such a program is made available, the teacher is obliged to adapt material designed primarily for formal, whole-class work to an individualized group program. Following the inventory of individual difficulties suggested above, the teacher may select and use parts of the workbook material that provide instruction and practice on particular difficulties. Even more practical is making an analysis of difficulties, with the units (letter groups) of the workbook as a basis. A work sheet may be prepared, containing goals, an index of the material of the workbook by letter groups, and provision for noting results of inventory tests and records of improvement. The example shown in Table

\* Paul McKee, *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, p. 450.



15-2 of such a work sheet (for grade 6 in the New Laurel Handwriting Series) may prove suggestive.<sup>10</sup> In this work sheet, letter groups are the groupings found in the pupil's workbook, and the numbers in the second column refer to pages in the workbook on which practice exercises are provided; spaces are provided under "Results of inventory tests" to record the results of the initial inventory tests; spaces under "Improvement record" are used to record progress from test to test, culminating in achievements at grade level or above it. It will be noted that, in addition to records of letter forms, places are provided for other aspects of handwriting, such as joining letters and spacing, and for general skills contributing to the handwriting product, such as posture, and pen holding.

A point much stressed in workbooks is the presentation of letters and combinations of letters in contextual material, commonly taken from the several curriculum areas. The purpose is to maintain a functional point of view in writing. This approach, well advised in a formal program, loses its force in a functional program. When practice in handwriting grows out of current writing experiences, no further emphasis need be given to contextual presentation.

All the other helps given in the workbook should be used: identification of difficulties, causes of errors, remedial procedures, practice exercises, and tests.

**Teaching a Practice Unit of Work.** This section considers the handling of an instructional unit for a class, group, or individual. Difficulties are presumably discovered in some writing experience in a functional program or in a copy-test exercise in a formal program. The teacher's task is to direct the children's work on the difficulty and bring practice of the correct form to the point of ready use in connected writing. The major steps of development are those outlined above in the section on "Treatment of Errors." The first step is observing the correct form and noting deviations from the standard. After the teacher has asked the children about the difficulty, or pointed it out, he notes the cause and gives corrective measures. The teacher demonstrates the writing of the correct form on the blackboard. As he writes he calls attention to significant features, including the point of beginning, the direction of stroke, and the height of the letter. Several rewritings may be necessary for emphasis. The teacher erases the letter, letter combination, or word, and the children write the whole word or letter from memory; they do not copy or draw. The children then compare their work with the correct form rewritten on the board and consider

<sup>10</sup> Modified from J. C. Almack and others, *New Laurel Handwriting Series, Grade Six*, Laurel Publishers, Scranton, Pa., 1937.

faults, if any. Reteaching as well as retrieval may be necessary. This procedure is continued until the children can produce a reasonably satisfactory letter or word. The letter is then rewritten a number of times and finally combined with other letters to form words and is then used in phrases and sentences. The final work is evaluated; if satisfactory, it is checked on the record sheet as provisionally mastered. As a follow-up the child may check his writing in purposeful compositions, restudying and re practicing as necessary. Sometimes during practice, children's writing becomes worse as attention shifts; a good procedure to combat this tendency is to have the child mark the best letter form in each line before proceeding to write the next set.

While directing practice on particular letter forms, the teacher calls attention to such general matters as are needed by the children: alignment, spacing, color, slant, grasp on pencil or pen, position of arm, hand, and body, position of paper, relaxation, speed, and rhythm. During directed practice the cause of a particular difficulty may be traced to weakness in one of the general factors. If the defect seems sufficiently crucial in the handwriting of a particular child, improvement in the general factor may be set up as a specific, immediate goal. However, satisfactory performance in general factors is best treated as a means to producing easy, legible, economical writing, not as an end in itself.

**Individual Work.** A certain amount of practice, following the instruction of the teacher, can be carried on independently with general direction and checks. If instruction as well as practice is handled on an individual basis, it is necessary either to develop general study procedures which the children can follow independently or to use self-help materials providing the instructional aids which the teacher normally supplies; such aids include diagnosis, remedial procedures, practice, and evaluation. Developing general habits of study is difficult but not impossible.

**Standards.** Standards are set by the demands of good social usage and vary with occupational and social needs. Grade norms as set by standard scales are not high; they should be reached and maintained by most children in any class with a minimum of time and effort. Individuality of style is permitted and encouraged within the limits of legibility and ease of writing.

**Motivation.** The primary motivation is found in purposeful writing wherein accuracy and legibility are regarded as a courtesy to the reader. In school many occasions arise where the necessity for good handwriting is immediately felt. Specific motivation for improvement is found in meas-

uring achievement, locating specific deficiencies, and checking and recording progress. One device that has been used successfully is a class goal-filing chart. On a sheet of manila paper 20 to 24 inches square, samples of the children's writing are arranged in three columns, forming a crude scale: unsatisfactory for the grade, satisfactory, and better than satisfactory. Pockets are placed below each sample. Children file their compositions from time to time in what they consider the proper pocket. The teacher checks and, if he agrees, leaves the compositions where he finds them. If the teacher feels that a child's judgment is in error, he takes the matter up with the child and they agree upon a proper disposition of the composition.

Following are some typical samples.

The cal. Indians made  
crude boats of tules by  
fastning tule reeds to  
gether with as strong rope.  
They also made their  
houses with tule reeds

(a)

The woman and boy by the tree  
are picking up acorns.  
The two men by the mountains  
are bringin venison. The woman  
by the lake is fetching water  
for the village.

(b)

The early california ladies  
picked acorns and made it in to  
<sup>acorn</sup>meal. The early california men  
liked to fish and hunt for deer  
They caught fish with a spear.

(c)

Fig. 15-2. Samples of fourth-grade children's handwriting regarded by the teacher as (a) unsatisfactory, (b) satisfactory, and (c) better than satisfactory.

**Beginning Handwriting.** We turn now to the first stage, work in beginning handwriting. Beginning work is like later training in point of view, procedures, problems of individualization, organization of instruction, and basic mechanics. The fundamental principles and procedures are the same; the differences lie in the adaptation of work to a lower-grade maturity level.

The functional point of view operates in beginning as in later writing. It is especially important that children acquire early an understanding of handwriting as a means of communication; therefore, the child's first writing should have meaning and purpose by being related to immediate activities. These are found in having the child write his own name and address, thank-you notes, signs, notes to parents, friends, and sick classmates, invitations, greeting cards, announcements, lists of games, activities, songs, tools and materials for room activities, library books read by pupils, records of experiences, names of characters in stories, riddles and rhymes, original stories, posters, notices, programs, slogans, records of birthdays and ages, charts, captions.<sup>11</sup>

**Readiness and Preparation for Writing.** Writing is a complex skill requiring a degree of maturity in mental and physical processes. Instead of abruptly precipitating a class or individual into writing experiences, the teacher does well to check readiness and to provide preliminary experiences. The ability to organize and express ideas orally is indicative of mental readiness. The necessary manual skills may be inferred from performance in games, drawing at the blackboard, making clay figures, cutting and coloring paper, constructing toys from wood, and rhythmic responses to music.

Pupils get specific preparation watching the teacher write at the board. They gain some understanding of sentences, words, letter forms, the writing process, and the left-to-right direction as the teacher writes records, directions, and notes on the board at the dictation of the children.

The teacher should watch for spontaneous efforts at copying or original writing. One kindergarten teacher says that when her children show an inclination to begin writing she sends home to the parents a pattern sheet for children's letters, to avoid the necessity of learning new patterns when the children go to the first grade.

**Manuscript Writing.** An early decision as to style of writing and the selection of letter forms is necessary. The chief question is whether to use manuscript or cursive writing. The marked trend toward manuscript writ-

<sup>11</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, *Commission on the English Curriculum, The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, p. 93

ing in beginning work seems justified on both theoretical and practical grounds. The chief arguments for its use are that (1) it is better adapted than cursive to the muscular development of children, requiring less fine coordination and less sustained effort; (2) the child can begin meaningful writing sooner; (3) it is similar to the form the teacher uses in making charts and is comparable to the printed letter forms.<sup>12</sup>

A transition to cursive writing is commonly made in the high second or low third grade. The selection of letter forms that are similar in cursive and manuscript facilitates the change; the problem of transition is then simply that of writing the word in one continuous movement with the connecting strokes. The letters that are different in cursive writing require separate teaching.

Another method of transition is to group similar letters and to follow a class procedure such as the following: "When we started to school, boys and girls, we learned manuscript writing because that seemed easiest for us. That is *one* kind of writing. There is another kind of writing which most of your mothers and fathers use. Suppose we try that kind of writing now." The teacher shows the children how to make a *c* beginning on the line, swinging away over, then back to the line and away again. "We'll leave a tail on our *c*, and make it point right over toward the next letter. If we close our *c*—like this—we have *a*. Now let's make an *a* with a top on it, and we have *d*. Could we put these three letters together and make some words—*add*, *cad*, *dad*? See how nicely all of the letters hitch together?" The teacher may start with a *c*, close it, and put a tail on the bottom—*g*. "Does that help us make another word—*gad*?" In succeeding lessons, the teacher may try the *o* and *g* and then call for words: *cod*, *dog*, *odd*, *cog*, etc.

The second group includes the letters beginning with an upward swing: *e*, *l*, *i*, *t*, *h*, *k*, *f*, *j*, *b*, *w*, *v*, *y*, *p*, *u*, and *s*; the third group includes *m*, *n*, *z*, and *r*.

Children like to make words with the new letters as learned; they sometimes make a game of it, coming from home with lists of words which they have worked out. The capitals must be taken up separately, but they can be taught in much the same manner.

**Practice-unit Organization and Sequence.** In the informal functional handling of writing in the primary grades, especially in beginning work, the organization is around writing experiences that have high interest be-

<sup>12</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum, *Language Arts for Today's Children*, p. 219.

cause of immediate purpose. For example, in beginning work the children have occasion to sign their names; later, they write individual notes to parents, inviting them to a class party. In such an informal program, words and letter forms appear in a chance order. New words and letters are learned as required. Instruction consists mainly of showing and copying and is incidental to the experience. Repetition comes through use.

Handwriting books offer a more systematic type of work organization. Words are selected that rank high in frequency of use in children's vocabularies, and some attention is given to emphasis on the most frequently used letters first, to sequence, and to a maintenance program of reviews.

**Handling a Practice Instructional Unit.** Generally, the procedures used in handling an instructional unit in later work apply here; learning is the same on both levels. The experience provides the point of attack and the basis of instruction. After explaining the need, the teacher demonstrates by writing the word, phrase, or sentence required. Oral instructions accompany the demonstration, calling attention to forms of letters, beginning point, direction of movement, spacing, etc. New or difficult letters receive special emphasis and may be isolated for a short training exercise. The word is the basis for writing, not the letter, and children write the whole word from memory. Work is checked with the teacher's copy for correctness; then practice follows. Individual difficulties are noted, and corrective work given. Training in position, holding the pencil, movement, and placing the paper are given incidentally. Work is compared with previous production to show progress.

**Individual Differences.** Individual differences are evident in the early as well as the later grades. Not all children are equally ready to begin writing, and as training progresses different levels of competency are apparent. Resourceful teachers distinguish degrees of maturity and competency, group children with similar needs, and provide a differentiated program of work suited to group needs.

Left-handedness is a problem mainly for the primary teacher. The dominance of the left or right hand should be established when writing is begun, and appropriate habits should be formed. Presumably, left-handedness is well established before the child enters school, and it is unwise to attempt a change. If there is doubt about the preference of hands, simple exercises may be used as checks.

At this point it is emphasized that the left-handed child needs understanding and sympathetic handling. Practically every instrument, tool, and gadget that he is called on to handle all through life is made for a right-

handed person: scissors, jackknife, pencil sharpener, broad-armed chair in college classrooms, and even the lowly can opener—all are “opposite” for him, and he is constantly adapting himself to awkward positions.

It is important, therefore, that the left-handed child establish correct habits of position and movement in handwriting. These correspond to the position and movement for the right-handed child, but the teacher must realize that his letter slant will be exactly opposite. In other words, when the pencil is taken in the usual position, but in the left hand, the eraser end points over the left shoulder and the resultant writing is a backhand. It cannot be otherwise, and as long as it is neat and legible, it is acceptable. Unfortunately, in the days of formal systems of penmanship, many left-handed children were bedeviled by the proper-slant problem until they were driven to writing with their left hand turned down from the top of the paper, practically upside down. Of course, the paper for the left-hander must slant toward the right, instead of toward the left, and the arm must assume the conventional position with reference to the paper. The movement is a combination of whole-arm and finger movement, as is characteristic of the right-hander. The left-handed child should be seated to get light from the right.

## EXERCISES

1. Make a rough diagnosis of the achievements of a class in rate and quality. Record the results on a scatter diagram.
2. Divide the class into groups, using the information gained in (1).
3. Plan a diagnostic-corrective program for children who are seriously deficient in handwriting—those who need extended, systematic training. Use available textbooks and workbooks.
4. Plan an instructional procedure for a new lesson or unit of work, any grade.
5. Examine several samples of children's written work and list difficulties.

## REFERENCES

- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, pp. 118-129.
- : *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, pp. 198-203, 232-233.
- and Frieda H. Dingee: *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 66-68.
- and Marian Zollinger: *Guiding Language Learning*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chap. 16.

- Herrick, Virgil E., and Leland B. Jacobs: *Children and the Language Arts*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955, chap. 12.
- Hildreth, Gertrude: *Learning the Three R's*, Educational Publishers, Inc., Minneapolis, 1947, chaps. 19-22.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, chap. 5.
- Lee, J. Murray, and Dorris M. Lee: *The Child and His Curriculum*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1950, pp. 427-429.
- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, chap. 10.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, pp. 46, 93-94, 105-106, 429.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 219-225, 248-257, 335.
- Russell, David H., and others: *Child Development and the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1953, pp. 20-22.
- Shane, Harold G.: *Research Helps in Teaching the Language Arts*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Washington, 1955, pp. 39-41.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, pp. 275-286, 360-363.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 161-164.



**NATURE STUDY: PLANTS, THIRD GRADE**

The following description of a completely integrated program is based on work carried on by Miss Butterfield, one of the authors of this book, in the third grade of the Potsdam Campus School. It shows how closely interwoven are the different school subjects and how many vicarious experiences may radiate from one basic theme. A center of interest—in this case nature study—will, if granted freedom, reach out and enter almost every phase of the school curriculum. By bringing together the various skills, knowledges, and appreciations of these different areas, both pupils and teacher may increase their understanding of the function of language.

In the present account of procedures and in the accompanying samples of children's work, the reader will find concrete illustrations of many points made elsewhere in this volume.

**How the Study Originated.** At the beginning of the fall school term when the children were asked what they would like to study about, flowers was one of the topics mentioned. The teacher felt that this was probably suggested by the time of year and by the fact that many garden flowers were in their prime just then. She doubted that the subject would be of long-term interest.

**Plants for the Schoolroom.** The first objective seemed to be to make the schoolroom attractive, and to this end many fall flowers were brought and arranged by the children. Simple rules regarding color and arrangement were discussed. It was decided that the flowers should be of different heights, of an uneven number, and so grouped that there should be balance and color variation. Holders and vases appropriate for particular flowers were selected. A library book containing illustrations of flowers and of simple flower arrangements was located, and the children tried to imitate the suggestions and examples.

Names of common flowers—zinnia, bachelor's-button, aster, cosmos, etc.—were mentioned and listed on the board. The children took pride in their ability to recognize these flowers, to pronounce their names, and to spell them correctly.

As the supply of garden flowers dwindled, wild flowers were gathered. Children brought goldenrod, wild asters, and Queen Anne's lace, and they arranged their bouquets attractively. One section of the blackboard was reserved for names of new flowers. If any child thought of an unusually vivid descriptive word, he wrote it opposite the flower name on the board. These words invited class criticism, both favorable and adverse; and some

children developed remarkably in their ability to describe accurately the appearance, color, and other qualities of certain flowers.

An interest in wild flowers led naturally to the study of seed dispersal; a chart was made, picturing different methods of dispersal and showing samples of each kind of seed. This project entailed considerable organization, labeling, lettering, and measuring. Words involved were listed and used in spelling lessons:

dispersal  
carrier

winged  
pods

traveler  
sticktight

**A Trip to Get Plants.** Plans were next made for supplying the school-room with winter plants. A retired teacher offered the contents of her large and lovely window box and garden. The children went one fine autumn afternoon just before the first frost to the home of Miss F, where they saw so many beautiful plants that they scarcely knew which they liked best. In anticipation of this dilemma, there had been a discussion among the pupils before they left school; they had selected spots in the room which needed or could accommodate plants and had accordingly taken just enough pots. At last all agreed upon a large begonia full of bloom, a coleus, and a pink ruffled petunia, which one little boy simply could not give up.

The children put hits of stone over the drainage hole in each pot and added sand, fertilizer, and loam from a bed; then the plants were lifted tenderly so as not to disturb the roots. More good soil was added and firmed about the plants. They were then watered and placed in Miss F's garage to become accustomed gradually to being indoors. The children understood that, if brought suddenly into a warm room, a plant might wither and lose some of its leaves.

Since Miss F had not been at home when the children made their visit, some doubts were expressed as to whether or not she would understand where the plants in her garage had come from. Reassured, the children suggested that they thank her for the plants, and the following letter was written:

Potsdam, N.Y.  
September 17, 1948

Dear Miss F,

We want to thank you for letting us dig up your plants and for leaving trowels and fertilizer for us to use. We enjoyed digging the plants and potting them, and we are anxious now to get them in our room.

Sincerely yours,  
Grade Three  
Room 15

This letter was composed by the group and copied from the board by three children who considered themselves good penmen; then a committee chose the letter they considered the best of the three written. The class elected a messenger who, on his way home from school, delivered the letter to Miss F's door.

**Water Plants.** About this time a child brought a small goldfish to school, and suitable accommodations had to be provided for it. By referring to library materials the class learned that plants should be grown in the water in order to keep it in good condition for fish. Pondweed was obtained, and the pupils learned that while some plants grow only in dirt, others grow only in water. The pondweed was planted in sand in the aquarium, and the children enjoyed watching it grow. Snails were brought to keep the aquarium clean. Other varieties of local water plants were discussed, and common names listed.

**Slips.** In a short time, it was noted that the branches of ivy had some tiny roots, and the term *slip* was introduced. The children learned that some plants could be started from slips, while others grow from seeds, roots, or bulbs; lists were made of plants reproduced in each manner.

About this time the children had fun playing a game of flower riddles, which they made up and asked each other. There was, naturally, wide variation in quality, but all the children seemed anxious to include as many good descriptive words as possible without telling what their plant or flower was. The following are samples:

I grow in the ground.

I have stems.

I am red or blue.

Who am I?

The old-fashioned ladies

Are trooping to town

With their bright yellow dresses

All trimmed with down

I grow from seeds.

My stems are slender, tall,

And sway in the breeze.

My graceful flowers are pink,

White, or sometimes almost red.

But my delicate leaves

Are always green.

After two or three weeks it was time to bring the plants from the garage. A committee was appointed to go with the teacher in her car to get them.

The children were delighted to find their plants so large and beautiful.

Dear Gail,

We thought you might like to see some of the coleus you helped pot last fall. The plant grew so big we had to break some off. We put the piece in water and made a little plant for you from the slip. We hope you will like it.

The plants have all grown so you wouldn't know them. Pat is watering them this week.

Come back soon.

With love,  
Grade Three

**Planning the Year's Work.** During the developments just described it had become apparent to the teacher that the study of flowers had progressed into a study of plants and that the whole subject had become one of more than passing interest. She discussed with the children the many different kinds of plants and their uses for other than decorative purposes. Working together, teacher and children listed four large major topics they wanted to explore during the year.

Plants for the Schoolroom  
Plants for Food  
Plants We Wear  
Other Plants We Use

These questions were listed on the blackboard:

1. Why do different plants live in different parts of the country?
2. Where do fresh vegetables come from in the winter?
3. What is fertilizer made from?
4. What do plants need for growth besides water?
5. How are different colors of the same flower secured?
6. How are different varieties of apples, fruit, etc., produced?
7. What makes different kinds of soil?
8. How is enough flour for all the bread obtained?

Since there had to be some order to the study, it was decided to begin with the unit on "Plants for Food," topic 2, as early in the autumn as possible and allow it to run simultaneously with topic 1.

Familiar vegetables and fruits were listed separately on the board; the children brought samples; and finally there was a large exhibit. Each article was labeled, a poster was made, and the following invitation was issued to the children of another grade:

We would like to have you come to see our Harvest Collection of fruits and vegetables Tuesday between 2 and 3 o'clock.

Grade Three  
Room 15

Ways of cooking the various vegetables were discussed. Children brought recipes from home. Measurements and simple abbreviations, such as tsp., lbs., c., pt., qt.,  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and  $\frac{1}{4}$ , were discussed, and rules of cooking to pre-

Since Miss F had given the pupils permission to take any other plants in the garage, they decided to take a geranium, which had a pink blossom, and a large shamrock plant. With a car full of plants, pupils and teacher went back to the school.

Several children brought plants from home, and in order to make space for them all, two bookstands were put together to make a corner around the reading table. On top of these low cases the plants seemed to thrive. Children took turns watering and earing for them.

**Winter Bouquets.** When, at last, the garden flowers were frozen and withered, the class talked of seed pod bouquets for the winter, and one warm morning late in autumn the class took a walk to see what could be found that might be useful. Along a hedge, at the edge of a garden, and in a vacant lot were found many stalks of weed seed pods, which were carried back to the school. The children quickly became conscious of the variety of size, color, and shape of seed pods; and the collection continued to grow as children found leaves, stalks, grasses, and berries in their own or neighbors' back yards and along the way to school.

A wall vase was filled with bright bittersweet berries attractively arranged. Milkweed pods, brown sorrel stalks, Queen Anne's lace (much dried but still delicate), and other grasses were arranged in a tall black vase by a group of children and placed on a low filing cabinet in a shadowed corner of the room because these plants did not need light.

Some of the weeds were carefully packed in a carton and stored in the school basement. At Christmas time, when the question of gifts for parents arose, the pupils thought of several uses for these dried weeds. Some of the delicate grasses furnished designs for spatterwork. Some children made small, flat, clay flower bowls which were painted and fired in the school kiln. With a clay frog in the center and an arrangement of dried weed pods, these bowls made individualized gifts. Some children experimented with coloring the weeds. Painted milkweed pods were considered especially attractive.

**Plant Care.** During the winter, the plants were routinely cared for, and they also occasioned sporadic outbursts of conversation and discussion. The wandering Jew in the hanging basket grew so long that it was dangerously near the radiator. Therefore, after pupil consultation, a bit was pinched off, rooted, and stuck back into the container. When, along in January, all the plants looked a bit sickly, liquid fertilizer was mixed and administered. The coleus grew so tall that some branches had to be snipped off and rooted in water. Various new plants were started from slips. One especially vigorous plant was potted and sent to a sick member of the class with the following letter:

Distances and the amount of required handling were roughly estimated; and thus the children came to some little realization of the amount of work necessary and the number of people involved in getting a head of fresh lettuce from California to New York. The effect of climate on crops, people, and customs was also discussed.

At school, a potato placed in a warm cupboard soon showed sprouts coming from its eyes, and it was learned that potato growers plant pieces of potatoes instead of seeds. The terms sprout and eyes were thus learned. A bushel of potatoes was traced from a nearby farm to New York City, and an estimate was made of the number of people who handled it—each person earning his living by his work. The children understood why potatoes must increase in price between the farm and the home. One child wrote a letter to his cousin in New York City to ascertain just how much was being paid for potatoes there, and the class was much interested in the reply.

Class letters asking for information were also written to the Farm Bureau and the Potato Growers' Association. Several children were taken by their parents to visit large potato farms in the vicinity, and these visits were reported to the class. Machines, such as potato planters, potato diggers, and spraying machines, were pictured. Words such as *insect*, *insecticide*, and *poison* were added to the pupils' vocabularies.

A carrot in water sprouted green leaves, and a tomato ball (moss implanted with tomato seeds) placed in a dish of water soon had tiny plants protruding from it. Beans resting on damp cotton further illustrated the sprouting process. There were also simple experiments to show the effect of moisture and different kinds of soil and fertilizer on plant growth. All these activities entailed record keeping, discussion, reporting, writing of dates, spelling, reading for information, illustrating, and vocabulary growth. The child who attempted to report without knowing what he was going to say was soon "shushed" by the class; but because there was such a wide variety of activities, everyone had a deep interest in something or other, and even the poorest members of the group had their innings.

In February a child brought some pussy willow branches to school. They were arranged in water, and the children watched the buds come out and change to hairy green catkins. Pictures were drawn of them, designs were made using the pussy willow motif, and descriptive words were listed: *fuzzy*, *dangling*, *hairy*, *soft*, *furry*. Several children wrote individual poems about pussy willows.

**Gardening.** Sometime in February a child reported that his father was ordering garden seeds. The class discussed the need for seeds and the rea-

serve all the good food values were pointed out. There were many conversations about favorite dishes and such remarks as "I like potatoes creamed better than fried" and "This noon my mother cooked some carrots with meat. I like them that way." Several children reported having sampled a vegetable hitherto untasted: "Last night we had parsnips and I ate some. Boy! They're good." Several mothers expressed delight over their children's willingness to try new foods. Dates, figs, and dried apricots were sampled at school and described as seedy, sticky, sweet, tart, etc. Some children had never before heard of these fruits.

Methods of preserving were also studied—canning, pickling, drying, and quick freezing; and many new words were thus added to vocabularies. The library was a constant source of information; and in connection with the harvesting and preserving of fruits and vegetables, considerable interest was generated about Indians and other primitive peoples, as well as about pioneer methods of preparing for the winter.

In October the children were asked to find out from their mothers' grocers where the fruits and vegetables in their stores had been grown. From these reports a chart was made, and it was quickly noticed that the majority of the green goods in the stores at that time of year had been grown locally, or at least in the state.

Just before Christmas another canvass of the grocery stores revealed the fact that, while cabbage, apples, potatoes, squash, and a few other items were state-grown, most of the fresh foods were by now coming to us from a distance. This entailed simple map study. California, Florida, Texas, and Arizona were located. Tie tags from bunches of carrots, broccoli, etc., were collected and brought to school, and the children took great interest in locating Phoenix, Arizona, and Salinas, California, on a map and noting the distance traveled by lettuce and other vegetables. A world map became of interest when someone reported finding grapes from Chile. Two other entries were made on the chart, one in March and one in June. Each time new states were located; and when it was understood that all the lettuce, celery, and carrots in the stores had to travel hundreds of miles to reach us, it made quite an impression.

Slides and films were shown depicting citrus groves, market gardens, and packing houses in distant parts of the country. Methods of transportation were investigated, and many new words added to the pupils' vocabularies:

budding	transportation	cultivation
soil	labor	rotation (of crops)
irrigation	graft	marketing
pollination	harvest	grading
drainage	select	pest

one room to another; and they saw them stroke and care for their queen and carry food to the nest. From this observation it was easy to understand how, by their industry, the ants helped keep the soil porous beneath plants.

Many pictures were drawn at different times illustrating the ants, their work, their home, and their habits. These pictures were the result of individual interests and were quite spontaneous. Whenever a child saw something interesting which he wanted to illustrate, he did so and placed his picture, when finished, on the chalk tray, where it usually occasioned criticism, either favorable or unfavorable, and sometimes downright challenge if he had misrepresented some phase of ant life. A magnifying glass, which aided in the study of ants, proved valuable in examining other objects about the room.

Many new words and meanings were added to the pupils' vocabularies. Praise was given to children who used new words often and naturally, and the children themselves registered displeasure and quickly supplied the needed word when someone spoke of a "thing" or a "jigger."

**A Daffodil Bulb.** Early in the winter a daffodil bulb was planted in peat moss, and the pot was anxiously watched for signs of the plant's growth. When the first pale-looking shoot became visible there was great excitement and the best of care was tendered the young plant. During the day the pot was placed in a sunny spot near a window, but not on the sill since that was too near a radiator. At night it was placed well away from the window lest it become chilled. When the blossom finally appeared and broke from its covering, everyone thought it lovely and marveled that such a large bloom could have been hidden in such a small, drab, hard bulb.

Words were listed which accurately described the blossom:

creamy white	soft lemon yellow	pale green
trumpetlike	graceful	beautiful
lovely	sweet-scented	fragile

Some children wanted to write stories or poems about the flower, but felt handicapped by spelling difficulties. A spelling lesson was accordingly made up of the most commonly needed words, while other words probably needed were written on a side board and left there for reference. The children were told to write their stories, spelling as best they could. Spelling "wouldn't count"; good stories were wanted, and spelling could be corrected later.

Following are five stories or poems, each one written individually. Often words were so poorly spelled that the teacher could not read them; but with the children to interpret, the stories were soon corrected:



son why most people did not save seeds but preferred to buy tested ones. The words *pollination* and *hybrid* were mentioned. Variety in fruits and vegetables was recalled, and the children described different strains of apples, with their characteristic appearances and flavors. McIntosh Red, Greening, Snow, Tollman Sweet, Early Harvest, and Northern Spy were listed. It was also learned that, by cross pollinating and grafting, new varieties of fruits, vegetables, and flowers were created.

Some of the children wanted to make a garden and raise something. An old window box was brought from the school basement, painted, and placed near a window. The following letter was written to two seed companies:

Campus School  
Potsdam, N.Y.  
February 23, 1949

Gentlemen:

Please send us your 1949 catalogue of flower and vegetable seeds.  
Thank you.

Yours truly,  
Grade Three  
Room 15

**Garden Helpers.** Someone reported that bees are helpful in pollination and, in many cases, necessary. A committee was appointed to find out everything possible about bees and their work. A classroom bee house was found, but to the children's disappointment no live bees were obtainable.

From reading it was learned that insects are influential in plant life, and some were listed:

*Garden Friends*

toads  
birds  
ants  
earthworms  
bees  
ladybugs

*Garden Pests*

potato bugs  
grasshoppers  
bean beetles  
tomato worms  
moles, mice, rats  
corn borers

*Control*

spray  
dust  
pull stubble

An ant house was obtained and stocked. For weeks these interesting creatures were watched, cared for, and fed boney and water. The queen, easily recognized by her size, was a never-failing source of interest. When the children came to school in the morning, they gathered immediately around the ant house to see where the tiny busybodies were and what they were doing. The children watched the ants moving gravel bit by bit from

Then, working together, the group soon had the following lines:

Then came the spring  
With rain and sun.  
Whispered a bulb,  
"Our work has begun.  
Come, stretch up your leaves,  
And send out buds  
For springtime has come  
And the garden is ours."

After the poem had been repeated a few times, a child suggested that, since we had used the word *spring* earlier in the poem, it might be better if we changed the next to the last sentence to read, *For winter has gone*. Then *ground* in the third line was changed to *earth*, *buds* in the third from the last line was changed to *flowers*, and the poem now read:

On top of the ground  
The snow lay deep.  
Down under the earth  
Brown bulbs were asleep.  
Then came the spring  
With rain and sun.  
Whispered a bulb,  
"Our work has begun.  
Come, stretch up your leaves  
And send out flow'rs,  
For winter has gone  
And the garden is ours."

So much satisfaction was expressed in the finished product that each child wanted a copy of the poem to keep. It was pointed out to the children that authors and poets wrote and rewrote their stories many times before they were finally published and that the rearranging of words showed that the class was improving and growing.

The poem was given as a choral-speaking piece, with a small group as the second voice doing the part said by the bulb. Before long, someone suggested writing a tune for the poem, and so music was composed for it by the group.

**A Window-box Garden.** The arrival of the seed catalogues occasioned great interest and much conversation. The pictures were studied, and hard words were sounded. In a few days the catalogues had been worn to a pulp as the children pored over them trying to decide what they wanted. Abbreviations such as *pkt.*, *oz.*, *lb.*, *ft.*, and *in.*, and words such as *dwarf*, *giant*,

I am a daffodil in the ground, and they call me brown.  
I am a daffodil sitting on a bill.

I am a flower.  
I'm pretty as can be  
And a woman picks me off my "feet."

Once I had a sleepy little bulb which I thought would never wake up. But at last, one day, up popped a tiny hand and then another and another. Last of all up popped the head, and there was a trumpet daffodil.

#### THE LONELY LITTLE BULB

Once upon a time there was a little bulb. He was very lonely in the ground until one day the sun came out very bright and he said, "I'd better grow now, or they'll be worrying about me." So every day he grew an inch. And one day he had four great big leaves on him. He said, "It's about time I poke my head out." Then he had more things to see in the whole world than in the dark ground, and he lived happily ever after.

There was a little bulb in the ground. One day the sun came out. The bulb popped its head up and looked all around. He looked at trees and then he looked to see where he was growing. He didn't know his name, but he was sure he must be very beautiful.

Finally a lady picked him and took him into the house. How happy and proud he felt!

After the blossom had withered, the bulb was taken out of the moss, the mass of roots was examined, and the bulb was laid on the window sill to dry. Later a child took it home to plant in the garden, where it would bloom again the next year.

The talk about bulbs spending the winter under the ground led to pictures depicting gardens of spring flowers and to some pictures representing bulbs beneath the earth—the bulbs having "baby faces" smiling as the sun shone from above.

One day in March after one of the heaviest snowfalls of the season, someone mentioned the brown bulbs awaiting the coming of spring and the warmth of the sunshine. Looking out of the window, one child said he had the beginning sentence for a poem, and he repeated slowly:

On top of the ground  
The snow lay deep.

To this another child almost immediately added:

Down under the ground  
Brown bulbs were asleep.

the leaf variety, so the latter was ordered. One little boy beld out for Giant White radishes, but he was outvoted in favor of a variety called Cherry-Belle, which looked especially attractive in the picture and was said to be a quick grower. A package of dwarf petunias—mixed colors—was also chosen. The total cost and the amount each child had to contribute were computed, and the order was mailed.

Now the window box was measured, and the terms *length*, *width*, and *depth* were learned in connection with the problem of determining the amount of soil needed to fill the box. Since there was still frost in the ground and good earth would be hard to get, the teacher bought two large bags of well-fertilized soil at a nearby agricultural college. Children lugged sizable rocks to school to provide drainage in the bottom of the box. The soil was added and patted into place. Though the pupils had been reared in a small village where everyone had plenty of out-of-door experience, this soft soil seemed to have a peculiar fascination for the children, and in odd moments there was always a child or two standing beside the box, just letting dirt trickle through his fingers.

When the seeds arrived there was more excitement. As planned, lettuce was to be planted in one end of the box, radishes in the other end, and the petunias as a border around the edge. The seeds were examined and the differences noted. Each child had some seeds to sow. Water was sprinkled over all. Great satisfaction was expressed by all the pupils.

Never were seeds more carefully tended nor more closely watched than those in the window box. A few radish seeds had not been completely covered, and one of these produced a sprout sometime between 11:20 A.M. and 12:45 P.M. The sprout was the cause of wild excitement when noticed by the first child to enter the room after lunch.

**Other Spring Activities.** With the coming of spring it could be seen that the winter's study of plants had been truly effective. Never in her long experience had the teacher known a group of children so observing and so interested in all growing things. The earliest swelling of tree buds was noted and watched. Crocus, daffodil, and tulip plants were reported as soon as they showed a spear.

Early in March a section of the board was given over to "Signs of Spring," and some of the entries were as follows:

March 8. Jimmy saw crows.

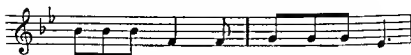
March 8. Eddie thought he saw two robins.

March 9. Ice on the river is thawing—David says.

March 9. Tulip sprouts at Susan's house.



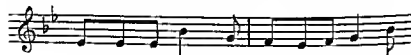
On top of the ground, the snow lay deep, Down



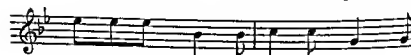
un-der the earth, brown bulbs were a - sleep.



Then came the spring, with, rain and sun.



Whis-pered a bulb, "Our work has be-gun. Come,



stretch up your leaves and send out flow'rs, for



win-ter has gone and the gar-den is ours."

Fig. 16-1. Creative song, "Spring."

and mixture, especially as applied to seeds, were studied. Prices were noted and compared.

After much discussion it was decided that some of everything listed in the catalogues really could not be planted, that probably dwarf varieties would be more suitable than giant, and that varieties which matured early were desirable for results before school closed in June.

It was finally voted to plant lettuce, radishes, and petunias; and a committee was appointed to choose the seed and fill out the order blank. According to the catalogue, head lettuce took much longer to mature than

IN SPRING

My mother bought me a pair of roller skates one spring day, so I went skating. I saw a robin singing in a tree and a woodpecker. There were lots of buds on the tree. The boys and girls were playing hop-scotch, picking pussy willows and flowers. Some were playing baseball or jumping rope. They were all glad spring had come at last.

MICKEY

I have a cat. He has a little house in the rose bushes. He and the other cats go in to get away from the dogs, sometimes to get out of the rain and sometimes just to play in it.

One warm, lovely morning in May the group working together wrote a poem, which seemed to describe what they had seen and felt as they came to school:

SPRING MORNING

I like to see the sun  
Shine on houses  
On a spring morning  
And the dancing shadows  
Of leaves.  
Birds sing gay songs,  
Sweet scents fill the air,  
Bright flowers bloom in the garden,  
And everything  
Is fresh and beautiful.

During odd moments in school and without help or suggestion, a little girl wrote a story which she called "Wind and Fairies." When the story was completed she read it to the class and was complimented:

WIND AND FAIRIES

The fairies live in a little yellow buttercup near the meadow. They work hard all day.

In early morning some spread dew while others open the flowers. They dance on the little yellow dandelions in the afternoon, and at night they close the flowers. After their work is done they dance by the light of the fireflies.

One day, while they were playing in the meadow, a big wind came and blew down all the buttercups, even their house. The fairies started to cry because it was such a nice house.

"Where can we find a new house?" said one of the fairies.

"In the woods would be a good place," said another fairy.

So they started out to the deep woods. They walked and walked until they came to a gurgling stream where they saw a beautiful white water lily. Here would be a good place to live. They could get water easily and also go swimming.

"Oh! We will have lots of room in here."

March 11. Alice's mother tapped trees.

March 13. Dorothy brought pussy willows.

March 20. Pat got stuck in the mud.

March 22. Ronnie's dog is shedding hair. He's very itchy.

The Easter season occasioned the writing of numerous individual stories and poems in which the flowers vied with the Easter Bunny as themes.

An Easter basket was packed for a sick classmate; in addition to the jellies, fruit, puzzles, and games in the basket, each child made a picture, wrote a note, or sent an Easter message.

All winter it had been noted at the regular weekly meeting of the Book Club that an unusually large number of the books reported by the children had been informational books—books read to "find out something."

Now wild flower and bird guides were in constant demand. Names of spring flowers were listed on the board and used in spelling. Small bouquets were soon gathered and brought to school, and the conservation of these wild plants was discussed. Careless pulling of plants was condemned.

On a walk one spring morning, the class saw various kinds of fruit trees in bloom or just leafing out. Peach, plum, pear, and apple trees were noticed, the shape and size of trees were compared, and their leaves and flowers were examined and described.

Large sprays of apple trees were brought into the classroom while still in bud, and the beauty of the opening flowers appreciated. The community's one and only magnolia was visited, and it served to emphasize the fact that people in other parts of our country have, due to climate, different plants. Pictures of fruit orchards in bloom, azalea gardens, and hibiscus hedges were brought by the children, and slides and films helped give an idea of flowers grown in other climates.

Spring stories and poems were written by the children and left on the teacher's desk for reading. Some stories were read in the original, while some were worked over by the children; but each child had a chance to read his story to the class:

#### SPRING

The flowers are blooming,  
And the birds are coming back.  
The grass blades are all peeping  
From their long winter's nap.

The squirrels are running up the tree  
And having lots of fun.  
I'll tell you a little secret—  
Spring has come.

In its dark bed the little bulb began to feel restless.

"Oh, hum!" it sighed sleepily. "My jacket is getting tight. I must be pushing up."

Meanwhile, above the earth, the fairies were watching closely for the first sign of their bulb.

Lightwing, the tiniest fairy of all, saw the wee tip of green sprout first and flew excitedly to the Queen.

"Your Highness!" she gasped. "Our flower! It is growing! I saw it."

Off fluttered the fairies after Lightwing, and in no time at all they were grouped around their wee plant, pointing and all talking at once.

The Queen Starbright spoke. "We must care for our plant and protect it from danger. We must keep the dirt loose around it and see that it gets water."

Days went by. The plant grew and grew. First came two dainty green leaves. Then, one warm sunny afternoon, Twinkletoes spied a chubby green bud just peeping up between the leaves.

There was great excitement when the fairies gathered around. "Oh!" they chorused, "It will be a lovely blossom."

"I hope it will be pure white," said Queen Starbright.

Several days went by. The fairies never left their bud alone for a minute. In the daytime they danced and played happily about it. At night Twinkletoes slept under a nearby clover leaf so that if the bud should open, she could hurry to tell the Queen.

One night, when Twinkletoes was just ready to drop off to sleep, she heard a faint "pop." Looking up she saw the bud gradually opening.

Off raced Twinkletoes to tell the other fairies the good news. Soon all were gathered around in a circle watching breathlessly as their bud slowly, very slowly opened into a beautiful pure white flower.

Its delicate drooping petals were as soft as velvet and it swayed gracefully on a long slender stem.

"Oh," gasped the fairies. "Oh, isn't it beautiful?"

For a moment they gazed silently at the wonder blossom. Then Lightwing spoke. "Your Majesty! You must have your palace here," she said.

"If it will please you, my subjects, I will be glad to live here in our flower," replied Queen Starbright.

The fairies were very happy as they danced and sang around their flower.

"At last our Queen has found a palace lovelier than any dream," they said.

Not content with having written a story, the children wanted to do something with it; so it was decided to try to give it as a play. A song was composed as a finale:

All day we dance around our flower.  
At last our queen has found her bower.  
Tra la la la la la la.  
Our queen has found her bower.

Since there was little conversation in the story, it was decided to have a reader, with the various characters speaking only occasionally. Addi-



"It will be strange living in a bigger house. We lived in such a little one before!"

"What beautiful white walls."

Then they all decided to go swimming. They splashed water on each other and got their curly hair all wet.

"But what will happen to us when the water lily dies," said the oldest and smartest fairy

"Oh! Gosh, I never thought of that," said the tiniest fairy.

"We will surely get seasick if we stay here too long. I wonder if there are any fairy hospitals near here."

"In the winter we can live in a bird's nest and go back to our buttercup in the spring. By that time it should be grown up."

In the spring they returned to their old home and lived happily ever after.

Judged by adult standards the above story leaves much to be desired. The young author seems to have run out of plot about midway in the story. Her beginning is good, however; and by taking the fairies back home again, she provides a satisfactory ending. The children liked the tale, and there was a sort of mass pride in the fact that a member of the group had written such a long story unaided.

Spurred by these individual stories, someone suggested that the class write a story. Beginning sentences were submitted, and Dorothy's was voted the best:

One warm moonlight night all the fairies gathered together and made a little brown bulb which they planted in Jeanie's garden.

For several days the story was worked on. Sometimes there were so many ideas for words or phrases that a vote had to be taken; and much rearranging was done, including the adding of descriptive words and the improvement of sentences. Finally the story was completed, copied by each child, and included in the individual story booklets:

#### THE FAIRY FLOWER

One warm moonlight night all the fairies gathered together and made a little brown bulb which they planted in Jeanie's garden.

"Next spring we will have a beautiful flower," said the Queen. "It will be different from any other flower in the garden."

Winter came. Cold winds howled. The flowers in Jeanie's garden withered and turned brown. Soft white snow fell and covered all the land with a fleecy white blanket.

But down under the earth while all this was happening, the little brown bulb was sound asleep. While it took its long winter rest, something was forming inside its shiny jacket which would make a lovely flower by and by.

At last winter passed. Bright sun melted the snow and warmed the earth. South wind blew and warm rain pattered down on the ground.

vegetable lunch in the room at school. The radishes had grown lustily but had failed to "radish"; they were all tops. Not to be cheated, however, the children brought radishes from home gardens, as well as cucumbers, lettuce, carrots, and tomatoes. Desks were arranged to form a long table, and individual salads were made on paper plates. Each child brought his own sandwiches. A cool fruit drink was made, two or three children brought homemade cookies, and one farm boy brought fresh strawberries. To the children this lunch seemed replete, and the teacher was gratified to find so much satisfaction in the simple fare.

#### **SOCIAL STUDIES: AMERICA IN SONG AND STORY, FIFTH GRADE**

Following is a short description of a year-long unit of work in which language plays an integral part. It was taught by Mrs. Ragnhild Stillman, fifth-grade teacher in the Campus School, State University Teachers College, Potsdam, New York. Because the teacher is a trained musician, the study was rich in music and folklore. However, other areas were not neglected. It is of necessity presented in brief summary.

Mrs. Stillman believed that her fifth-grade children should have a knowledge of the beginnings of their country. They should understand what is meant by a republican form of government, its origins and composition. They should know how the myriad nationalities, religions, ideologies, racial backgrounds, languages, customs, and political divisions have melded together to form a wonderful nation. They should know that such a melding must of necessity be slow, that errors of judgment are bound to occur, and that only by the honest and constant watchfulness of all citizens can errors be avoided. With these lofty aims in mind, Mrs. Stillman developed the program with the children.

The United States was divided into five areas for study: New England, Middle Atlantic states, Southeastern states, Middle West including Southwest, and Western and Mountain states.

Beginning with New England, committees of children began research on the historical background and settlement of the country. Questions were asked and topics noted for study, such as the background of the Pilgrims and reasons for coming to America, treatment of the Indians, form of government, development of the town meeting, religion, growth of the colony and the area, witchcraft, development of seafaring, whaling and fishing industries, sea chanteys, folk songs and dances, effects of topography

tional conversation was ad-libbed; but the reader carried most of the part, pausing to allow time for dances. To provide a part for the boys, a group of elves was introduced. They danced and sang with the fairies.

Simple crepe-paper costumes consisting of skirts for the main characters, capes for the fairies, caps for the elves, and green mitts plus five white petals for the bulb served to make the children feel important and took little time to construct. The bulb slept under a brown paper-covered carton and rose therefrom at the proper moment.

For a background, the children cut large, conventionalized flower shapes, which they colored brightly with chalk. These and a few large paper leaves were taped to the wall at the back of the stage. A large, paper clover leaf mounted on a piece of wallboard, which was leaned against the wall, provided a place for Twinkletoes to sleep. Everything was kept extremely simple, and there was only one rehearsal in the auditorium. It was the children's story. They had chosen the characters and done the planning. Every child had a part and a bit of costume, and his name was on the program, which was read by the announcer. To the list of characters the announcer added a brief explanation of the story and study:

This year we've been studying about plants and flowers. During the winter we had a bulb which blossomed. The blossom was so pretty that we wrote a story about it. Then we decided to make a play of the story. This is what you will see. We made a song for it too.

The play was given at the regular assembly period. Individual invitations had been taken to mothers, and several group invitations had been written and delivered to other grades. The play was well attended, and both actors and audience seemed to enjoy the performance and feel that it was worthwhile.

**A Picnic.** A few days before the end of school, a visit to Miss F was arranged. One pleasant morning each child, carrying a plant, a rooted slip, a marigold plant raised from seed, a bulb, or a vine, walked the short distance to Miss F's house.

She welcomed the class warmly with exclamations of "Oh!" and "Ah!" for the beauty of the plants, was duly appreciative of the slips all ready for her to put into her window box, and made the children feel that they had a real part in her garden. Fresh, fat, molasses cookies with plump raisins in their centers were served from an old-fashioned earthenware cooky jar, and all the children were happy. They thanked Miss F and told her how much they had enjoyed the plants during the winter.

Instead of the customary end-of-year picnic, the children suggested a

and research. Spelling, art, and writing were all involved. Plains Indians were studied and the white man's mistreatment of them was noted. Cowboy dances and songs were learned. The long wagon trains and reasons for the westward movement were studied along with the growth of cities, population, and products. Contrasts of language with that of the South and New England were noted.

For a study of the Mountain and Western states, the class was divided into three parts representing the Oregon, California, and Santa Fe Trails. Questions were set up on a teacher-pupil basis, and each group studied a particular trail. The land, people, customs, history, products, songs, foods, etc., were investigated and then reported to the other groups. For instance, travelers on the California Trail reported on the Forty-niners, the Mormons, and such songs as "Clementine"; while the followers of the Santa Fe Trail showed pictures of Pueblo Indians and demonstrated some of the ceremonial dances. The Oregon Trail reporters told about Kit Carson, the Whitman family, and Buffalo Bill.

The study culminated in an operetta, the scene laid at a railroad station. A group of greeters entered singing "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain." Travelers arrived from many parts of the United States, exchanging news. There were songs and dances from the whole country: "Rip Van Winkle," "Down in the Coal Mine," "Cape Cod Chantey," "Old Storm-along," "Night Herding Songs," "Dixie," "The '49ers," and others. Such characters as Jesse James, Johnny Appleseed, and Rip Van Winkle were introduced as travelers. A narrator wrote his own script but improvised freely. A stationmaster called the stations as the imaginary trip progressed across the country. An original song for Paul Bunyan was written by the group, and a poem for Johnny Appleseed was given as choral speaking. Everyone helped with the simple stage setting and props. The children who were not actual characters on the stage were grouped around the piano as a chorus. The operetta ended with "This Is My Country," sung twice by the whole group.

Invitations were written to parents and to other rooms in the school. Posters were made advertising the operetta. A report was prepared for the school paper.

Arithmetic was involved in computing time, distances, population, costs, and dates, in measuring and construction work for the stage props, and in many other ways.

Had time permitted, science could have been strengthened by studying more of the industries and products of the areas, such as cars in Detroit, copper in Montana, oil in Texas, power production at great dam sites, irri-

on New England life, legendary characters and heroes, hero literature, language of the people, products and industries, modern cities and population, rivers, and present-day New England.

Finding information on these topics required endless reading and research by individuals and committees. Letters were written to chambers of commerce, government agencies, travel bureaus, and individuals asking for information and conveying appreciation for favors received. Information was checked and rechecked for accuracy. Posters were made illustrating certain facts. Slides were shown, pictures collected, a museum visited, and costumes of the different periods were studied. Records were played, and sea chanteys were sung with much gusto. Models of log cabins were constructed. A study was made of the foods of the Indians and of white settlers. Poets and novelists of New England were studied.

The Middle Atlantic states were treated in the same way. Each bit of information led to more questions, and these in turn required more answers. Here, such tales as *Rip Van Winkle* and other Washington Irving stories were tied in with the Hudson River Valley and the Catskill Mountain area. Products and natural resources of the different areas were studied. It was found that the beginnings of the great coal and steel industries and the need for labor brought together people of different nationalities with their various tongues, customs, songs, and dances. Street-vender songs of early Philadelphia and Baltimore were learned. Comparisons were made between the early settlers of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New England; and their influences upon the development of work, play, customs, literature, and music of each area were noted. Language differences were noted.

The Southeastern states brought a study of still different peoples. The Spanish of Florida, the French of Louisiana, Negroes and slavery, cotton, tobacco, and plantation life were introduced along with such characters as Daniel Boone. Children were fascinated by legendary heroes like John Henry, and they never tired of the ballads, spirituals, and songs of Stephen Foster. Folk stories of mountaineers and Negroes were collected and studied with reference to origins and similarities to the folk tales of other areas. Dialects were tried and dances learned. Present-day trends were noted: industrial changes, growth of cities, population adjustments, and changes in products.

Into the study of the Middle West came many characters, some real and some fictional: Johnny Applesseed and Mark Twain, to mention only two; and their contributions to our great American melting pot were noted. There were choral speaking, dramatization, map study, extensive reading

development of children. He must know what may be reasonably expected of children at the grade level and must recognize good work. It is helpful to keep a continuous inventory of individual and group needs as they arise in science and social studies. He may plan lessons or discussions in such a way as to provide practice in language work—letter writing, reporting, note taking, critical thinking, etc. The children are led to recognize their needs and to share in the responsibility of meeting them. There is continuous checking on language goals, and records of progress are noted on prepared check lists.<sup>1</sup>

If a teacher is required to follow a rigid course of study, he may not be able to manage a fully integrated program. However, if alert, he can from time to time find opportunities to combine language with social studies, reading, science, and all other subjects. If a teacher has some freedom, imagination, and alertness, he will be able to quickly snatch at opportunities, often not too clear-cut. Integration will take place regardless of what name is given to it. It is not so much a matter of experience as of enthusiasm, good judgment, courage, and above all an exploring spirit. Too many teachers are afraid to venture, lacking confidence in their judgment and ability. They lean too heavily on the printed word and want directions for every move. They feel they must have a syllabus, a course of study, or at least a workbook to guide them; and lacking such a crutch, they revert to their own school experience in which *their* teachers were probably following a book.

Within the limits of a basic framework or course of study, the teacher may maintain an open mind. He may set forth an initial aim as a sort of feeler, and may almost immediately discover leads going off in many directions. It is his responsibility to determine which of the many possibilities are most worthwhile and to skillfully lead the children to explore. To outline too definitely and to set up a detailed plan of study at the beginning may be as restricting as a workbook or syllabus, and the effect may be to destroy immediately his freedom to explore.

## EXERCISES

1. List other interests similar to flowers that might properly serve as organizing centers for developing work in language.
2. Sketch phases of language work that might be included in a large unit other than flowers.

<sup>1</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, *Commission on the English Curriculum, The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, pp. 181-182.

gation, atomic energy in Nevada; and the study of weather, climate, soil erosion and fertility. The possibilities are endless, worthwhile, and thrilling.

In the study there was doubtless much which fifth graders could not fully appreciate, but the teacher felt that these children grew amazingly in learning how to search for information, sift facts from conjecture, weigh opinions, keep records, and make reports. Most important, perhaps, they had grown in an understanding of our nation and its people, and in understanding the influence of racial backgrounds upon our customs, industries, and speech. They learned that through our mixed heritage we are related to many peoples of the world; that working together requires understanding and acceptance; and that, as Americans, we must take an active, intelligent interest and do our part toward maintaining sound government and a stable social order.

#### HANDLING AN INTEGRATED PROGRAM

It must be apparent to the thoughtful reader of the preceding descriptions that an integrated program is a program of positive instruction, not a program of indifference and neglect. The teacher actually *teaches* language. An integrated program does not offer an escape from the responsibility of definitely working to improve children's language ability. Preparation and planning must be consistent and thorough. Because language work is not laid out in orderly blocks of time and treated separately, the teacher must constantly keep in mind all important aspects of language, and must recognize and take advantage of opportunities for providing specific training as they arise.

Instructional procedures developed in the preceding chapters apply as well to an integrated program as to a functional program. Situations arise for writing a letter, for conversation, for extending vocabulary, and for improving speech; and time out is taken, if advisable, to provide specific help on a particular phase of language work. Some teachers feel that to interrupt a social studies or a science lesson with How can we improve that report? How could we say it more clearly? or Let's think of some words that describe this color more accurately, is to steal time from science; and they feel guilty. Actually attention is not being diverted from science but is rather focused upon it, for by repeating a bit of information and expressing it more clearly and more exactly one is adding to understanding and retention.

In handling an integrated program the teacher needs a clear understanding of the important goals of language and of the course of the normal

## Grade Goals and Sequences

It is necessary in setting up a language program to plot the course that language development is to take and to clarify as clearly as possible the levels of growth that may be expected for each grade. This over-all planning is primarily the responsibility of curriculum makers, but it is a task so complicated by details and by variabilities in classes that curriculum makers can never hope to give more than general direction, leaving to teachers the responsibility of supplying the details and of making final adjustments to classes and individual pupils. The teacher's interest in respect to the over-all program of work is twofold: (1) preserving continuity in the language development of his pupils and (2) meeting the needs of pupils whose abilities actually spread over many grades. Our present general concern is with the work of a particular grade or class as it relates to the work of other grades, preceding and following.

Numerous references to grade goals and sequences have been made throughout the text, both in expository form and in examples. We now come to grips with the matter in summary form.

**Difficulties.** The task described above is easily stated in general terms, but the actual setting up of defensible goals for a particular school or class presents difficulties which should be recognized and faced candidly from the outset. The *first* difficulty is occasioned by the varying social needs of pupils in various schools. Schools generally are located in neighborhood areas in which the school population is relatively homogeneous; but the school populations of different areas vary widely in socioeconomic status, culture, and language background. Some schools draw largely from business- and professional-class families that maintain a high level of culture and spoken language in the home; the language here heard from infancy



3. List the phases of language work brought into the study of flowers, as developed in this chapter. Compare work in language with standard third-grade requirements. Evaluate content.

4. From the samples of children's work given in the chapter, compare apparent achievements in language with results achieved in a more formal program.

5. Can you think of additional activities which might well grow out of this?

6. Report from a course of study or other source a further example of an integrated program.<sup>2</sup>

## REFERENCES

- Broening, Angela M., and others: *Conducting Experiences in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, chap. 15.
- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, chaps. 9-10.
- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, pp. 60-62.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, chap. 2.
- Herrick, Virgil E., and Leland B. Jacobs: *Children and the Language Arts*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955, pp. 112-117.
- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, chap. 7.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, pp. 179-186, 198-210.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 297-301, 320-329.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, p. 312.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 115-117.

<sup>2</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum, *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, chaps. 8-10. Also see *A Program in English: A Guide for Teaching the Language Arts, K-12*, Deaver Public Schools, Department of Instruction, Denver, Colo., 1953.

of ability at every grade level above the primary. For example, at grade VII the average range in capitalization is more than seven years, the punctuation is more than eight years, and the English usage range is almost eight years. . . . a teacher at any grade level is likely to be concerned to some extent with all goals.

Objective data are impressive enough, but even they do not reveal the problem in all its complexity. It might be assumed, for example, that children who are low in average performance are low in every experience and in every ability and skill that contributes to average performance. This is not the case. A low-average child often rates high in some specific phases of the work. For example, one child wants to recite all the time, while another child voluntarily participates seldom or not at all; one child defends his position to the bitter end, while another gives in without a protest; one child responds favorably to criticism, while another is extremely sensitive and easily hurt; one child thinks clearly and sticks logically to the point under discussion, while another child wanders aimlessly. The true and complete picture of individual differences is revealed to the teacher only as he systematically studies his children's work and behavior from day to day. The unevenness of development makes it difficult to set rigid class and individual goals.

Following are two poems written by two third-grade boys during a story-writing period when the teacher had imposed no restrictions. The children were free to write about anything in prose or in free-verse poetry. Most of the children wrote in prose, but for reasons of their own these boys chose poetry as their medium. Nothing has been changed in either poem except spelling.

#### THE LITTLE TREE

*(John's story)*

Once there was a little tree  
Just as pretty as could be  
But then one day a little bee  
Made a nest in that little tree.

#### NIGHT

*(Jim's story)*

The sun was dying  
The moon was slowly being born  
The stars were being christened  
For on was coming night.  
Pure twilight now was present.  
Now the light is dim  
Ah! now all is darkness  
Night is here again.

is the language of educated people, and social pressure favors the use of good English. Other schools draw largely from quite different populations—from people in low-income brackets, laborers, and groups in which any one of several foreign languages is spoken in the home. It is a basic principle that language training and standards of acceptability should conform to the cultural needs of the population that the school serves. No one program or pattern can be devised that will meet the needs of all communities. This means, of course, that much of the responsibility for planning the language program will be borne by the local school staff and by individual teachers in the school. A curriculum-research department or committee in a state, city, or county system may set up a philosophy and sketch the general features of the language program, and it may state in general terms the kind of adaptations to local schools that need to be made; but local school staffs and individual teachers must expect to adapt the general program to their specific needs.

A *second* difficulty in the problems now being considered arises from the nature of language and from the complexity of growth in language. Language serves many specific purposes and takes many forms, such as telling stories, giving reports, outlining, summarizing, and engaging in discussions. Training in one kind of experience carries over to others to some extent; but the identity of each must be recognized by the speaker, and suitable adaptations in techniques must be made. Growth in language means growth simultaneously in many interrelated but separate experiences. Moreover, growth in any experience means growth in a number of specific attitudes, abilities, and skills of which the experience is composed. An experience cannot be isolated and taught entirely separately from other experiences; nor can attitudes, abilities, and skills be entirely isolated from experiences and from each other, and be developed separately.<sup>1</sup>

A *third* difficulty arises from dealing with the extreme variations in language abilities represented by the members of any class. If all the children of a class were equally mature in language, teaching would be simpler, although not simple. But children are not equally mature. Statistically stated, the range in variability of the members of one class may be as much as seven grades.<sup>2</sup>

When one measures the achievement status of children at different grade levels in the elementary and high school, one finds almost the complete range

<sup>1</sup> M. R. Trabue and others, *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, chap. 1, pp. 91-92.

<sup>2</sup> Trabue and others, *op. cit.*, p. 200. Also see National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum, *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, pp. 248-249.

The teacher cannot profitably attempt to meet all the current needs of children. What is most important? For example, in speaking is correct usage more important than freedom of expression? The teacher must set reasonable limits to his program. Exact, detailed directions about what to do in every situation cannot be given, but teachers can consider the matter and use their best judgment to formulate general policies.

**Determining Needs and Setting Up Goals.** The teacher can set up goals for a class by observing the way children handle various experiences, and by noting the abilities and skills shown by the children in carrying on the experiences. He may note, for example, that children are good in conversation or storytelling but relatively weak in dramatizing or in creative writing. He may note also that children are eager to participate, but have difficulty in finding worthwhile things to say and in sticking to the point. He will be alert for general levels of ability in the class and for variabilities among individuals. The teacher can thus proceed to set up tentative goals for the whole class and for individuals. This assumes, of course, some experience and maturity on the part of the teacher. Until a teacher acquires that experience and maturity, he may welcome assistance in setting up grade goals. Textbooks and courses of study give much help.

A comparatively simple and practical approach is to make an analysis of a basic textbook or course of study. The textbook, if reasonably satisfactory, provides in convenient form the results of extended study and research of competent persons. The work is necessarily detailed, providing a complete series of grade goals designed to meet the developmental needs of children. The book will give a program of work for a grade and planned sequences among the grades. It will show the basic experiences that the authors regard as essential and also the work in related abilities and skills. The course of study is usually more general in character, leaving out many essential details. The summary at the end of the chapter will show the kind of material gained from a course-of-study analysis and will be useful for comparison with other sources and for the study of particular problems of grading and sequence. Attention may profitably be given to the specific items—experiences, abilities, and skills—assigned to the several grades and to sequences from grade to grade.

It is unlikely that a program of work outlined in a course of study or textbook, such as that at the end of the chapter, will meet exactly the needs of a particular school or class, but it will show the general nature of curriculum content, and it may serve as a point of departure in setting up a particular program. It is quite possible that texts will not be available for work in grades 1 and 2, and possibly not in grade 3. Teachers in these

enabling the teacher to determine with reasonable exactness just what stage a class, and each individual in a class, has reached. This plan is favored by an impressive number of competent authorities. For example, Smith says, "It is quite possible that, for the sake of practical curriculum making, *moments of initial attack* upon specific problems may be worked out for individual school systems, but obviously *no set standards of mastery can be imposed upon children at any specific grade level.*" The analysis of outcomes in conversation and in discussion "indicate clearly that it is possible to map the *direction of growth* in each of the areas."<sup>8</sup> And the Commission on the English Curriculum says "Instead of arbitrary standards for the various grade levels . . . teachers need descriptions of systematic sequences in language learning which apply to all pupils."<sup>9</sup> And they say further, "They [teachers] do not think primarily of grade placement of materials . . . but think rather of next steps in the development of each child in language power."<sup>8</sup>

Sequences should be planned for important lines of growth, in both experiences and in abilities and skills. Sequences in conversation, telephoning, discussion and planning, telling stories, dramatizing, and reporting are described by Hatfield.<sup>9</sup> Sequences in abilities and skills have been worked out in several courses of study.<sup>10</sup>

The flexible plan emphasizes the important principle of continuity of learning and provides flexibility in adapting work to the needs of a particular class and to individuals. The teacher is encouraged to study the levels of development of his pupils and to begin instruction where they are. He may be relieved of the necessity of doing prescribed work regardless of the needs of his pupils, and he does not feel compelled to reach fixed goals.

**The Grading of Experiences.** From a consideration of the general problems and points of attack in laying out a program of work by grades, we turn to the specific problems involved in the grading of specific parts of the

<sup>8</sup> Trabue and others, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>9</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

<sup>9</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum, *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, p. 54. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

<sup>10</sup> W. W. Hatfield, *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, chap. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Gladys S. Higbee and Elga M. Shearer, *Guide to the Teaching of Oral and Written Language in the Intermediate Grades*, Long Beach City Schools, Long Beach, Calif., 1940. *Trends in Elementary Education: A Teacher's Guide*, San Diego County Schools, San Diego, Calif., 1945. *A Program in English: A Guide for Teaching the Language Arts, K-12*, Denver Public Schools, Department of Instruction, Denver, Colo., 1953, chap. 4.

grades must use their own resources to set up programs and may secure supplementary texts or workbooks to use as guides or references. Several good sources of material for work on these levels are available.<sup>4</sup>

**Surveys of Local Needs.** The adaptation to local needs of the basic program as outlined in a course of study or textbook is best based on thorough surveys of the local needs. The accumulated experience of teachers working in a particular school will contribute much useful information. Teachers as a group may profitably organize surveys to show what kinds of language experiences are carried on by children in the home and in the community; what patterns of language expression prevail; what standards of usage are acceptable; what specific difficulties of construction, usage, and speech, particularly pronunciation and enunciation, are common; and what resources in personal experiences may be used to provide content.

**Absolute Grading versus a Flexible Plan.** Another positive attack on the problem of grading is to decide on a basic pattern for organizing the over-all program. Two choices are possible: organizing goals by grades or indicating sequences of goals regardless of grades. Organization by grades is the traditional and still the common plan in courses of study and in textbooks. Miss Dawson's program, as reported in a later section of this chapter, is an example of a grade plan. From the point of view of a teacher, it is definite and specific; it shows exactly what should be accomplished in a particular grade. It assumes that language work can be broken down into specific stages of development, that these stages can be allocated to particular grades, and that the goals are reasonably satisfactory for the grade and for all the pupils of the grade. Sequences are implied but not shown; to determine sequences the teacher must consult the specifications of preceding and following grades.

Although the absolute grading plan is almost universally followed in courses of study and in textbooks, its limitations are apparent to theorists and teachers. Language development cannot be broken down into a fixed set of discrete steps, and the variabilities of individuals within classes are so great that fixed goals are quite meaningless for many individuals. Everyone agrees that grade goals should be flexible, adaptable to various classes and to individuals within classes and that learning should be continuous.<sup>5</sup>

A possible alternative to fixed grading is to block out desirable sequences,

<sup>4</sup> Mildred A. Dawson, *Language Teaching in Grades One and Two*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957. Paul McKee and others, *Let's Talk*, and its workbook, *Let's Write*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1956. Malilda Bailey and others, *Language Learnings, K-2*, American Book Company, New York, 1956.

<sup>5</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, *Commission on the English Curriculum*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

6. To converse during "refreshments" served at a table, to not more than eight persons at once.
7. To meet strange children gracefully and graciously.

Letter writing may be used as another example of the graduation of work to meet increasing difficulty and the maturity of the pupils. In the beginning, the letter takes the form of a simple communication dictated to the teacher by the pupils. The pupils help plan the content, sentences, and organization; the teacher provides the heading and salutation. The class letter may be copied by the pupils. Gradually the pupils take over more responsibility for various parts of the letter; first, a simple salutation and close; later, the heading, varied forms of close, and addressing the envelope. Classwork gradually gives way to individual composition at the later third- or fourth-grade level; and with a minimum of guidance from the teacher, the pupils assume full, individual responsibility.<sup>13</sup>

In sum, each major experience of the language curriculum is broken down into steps of difficulty, a desired sequence is indicated, and goals are set for classes and individuals in terms of maturity and capacity. The exact definition of these goals is one of the major tasks of curriculum makers and teachers, and is a practical and very necessary piece of work. Courses of study and textbooks give some help.

**Grading and Sequences of Attitudes, Abilities, and Skills.** We face the same problems in grading attitudes, abilities, and skills that we face in dealing with experiences: What emphasis should be given to each at the several grade levels? What is the order of importance, or the sequence?

The primary weaknesses of the traditional program are that it fails to give proper attention to lifelike experiences and that it attaches too much importance to mechanical performance, such as usage and punctuation, to the neglect of other, more important factors. The emphasis placed on attitudes, abilities, and skills largely determines the quality of language work.

There is some authority for the following listing of factors in order of emphasis and of importance for language development:

1. Attitudes:
  - Be willing to participate.
  - Desire to improve.
  - Discover and correct own errors.
2. Courtesies:
  - Listen attentively.
  - Give and take criticisms pleasantly.
  - Behave amiably.

<sup>13</sup> See Paul McKee, *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, pp. 181-188.

language program: experiences, attitudes, abilities, and skills. The grading of experiences logically requires first consideration.

When one analyzes the experiences allocated to the several grades by various courses of study and textbooks, one gets some interesting results. The striking fact is that the same general types of experience appear in practically every grade. For example, oral communication, conversation, discussion, and asking and answering questions appear in the kindergarten and continue through the eighth grade; telephoning begins in about the second grade, and meetings in about the fifth. Generally oral forms appear early, indicating the dominance of oral experiences in the early grades. Certain written forms, such as friendly letters and invitations, appear early also, and they are used throughout the grades. The more complex written forms, such as outlines and summaries, begin in the intermediate grades. In the judgment of authors and of curriculum makers children carry on about the same experiences at various grade levels and they need continued instruction and practice. The appearance of a number of experiences in a grade does not signify that all of them receive the same emphasis; for example, in one fourth-grade book, conversation appears in every unit, and invitations in only one. Nor should one assume that the same elements in experiences are taught in all grades; there is a progression of elements within the experiences.

The principle of immediate need operates in the grading of experiences and in relative emphasis on experiences. Work on speaking and writing experiences is begun in the grades in which the children normally begin to use these experiences extensively. When the experience is too difficult for the children alone to handle, the teacher helps, as in letter writing at the second-grade level.<sup>11</sup>

**Sequences within Experiences.** Since the same experiences spread over many grades, it is obvious that the major grade differentiation does not occur in kinds of experiences. The same experiences are carried on at increasingly higher levels of performance. Hatfield offers such a breakdown of the various experiences, "experience strands," into steps of increasing social complexity. For example, in conversation: <sup>12</sup>

1. To talk with a familiar small group about home experiences.
2. To talk with a familiar small group about shared experiences.
3. To be a good host to visitors from another room or from outside the school.
4. To be a satisfactory guest.
5. To converse interestingly and pleasantly with mere acquaintances.

<sup>11</sup> Trabue and others, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>12</sup> Hatfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-141.



3. Content:
  - Select topics that are good, limited, and appropriate to situation.
  - Choose interesting details.
  - Express thought completely.
  - Express own thoughts and feelings.
  - Distinguish real and make-believe.
4. Organization:
  - Stick to the point.
  - Follow good sequence.
  - Use good beginning and ending sentences.
  - Paragraph properly.
5. Vocabulary:
  - Use vivid, apt words and phrases.
  - Avoid trite words and phrases.
6. Sentences:
  - Express complete thought.
  - Avoid gross crudities.
  - Use variety.
7. Speech:
  - Speak audibly.
  - Speak distinctly.
  - Use correct pronunciation.
  - Use pleasing voice.
  - Deliver speech effectively.
8. Usage:
  - Use verbs appropriate to the situation.
  - Use pronouns correctly.
  - Use adverbs and adjectives correctly.
  - Avoid redundancies.
9. Written mechanics:
  - Use correct capitalization and punctuation.
  - Use proper manuscript form.
  - Be neat.

There is one point in the grading of abilities and skills on which there is general agreement, namely, that developing proper attitudes should receive first consideration. This priority is true, not only in the earliest grade in which language is taught, but also in every grade. Until a teacher secures free and voluntary willingness to participate, he cannot hope to take steps in the direction of improving ability in the technical aspects of language. The problem first appears in oral work. Fundamental factors of personality are involved. Desire to improve and willingness and ability to discover and correct one's own deficiencies come later, but they are equally fundamental factors.

Courtesies are placed high on the list because they are closely related to willingness to participate. Particularly important is friendly, appreciative

of composition. Considerable evidence has been accumulated concerning needs at various grade levels (determined by use in spontaneous writing), the proper order of treatment, and various levels of difficulty. Textbooks and courses of study are usually quite definite in listing grade requirements in these areas.

Usage is somewhat affected by local language patterns, and local surveys are necessary in setting up a usage program. However, the peculiarities of the English language and language patterns affecting large areas are such that certain basic crudities are widespread. These common crudities are well known, and their grading is commonly indicated in detail in courses of study and in textbooks.

One of the most extensive and authoritative studies of usage, including capitalization and punctuation, is that of O'Rourke. The culmination of his study is a listing of items in sequence of importance, not a grading, based on these factors: "(1) the practical utility of each phase of usage; (2) the difficulty of each phase of usage, and (3) the relation of each phase of usage to other phases."<sup>15</sup>

#### Example of Grading in a Course of Study, Grade 2<sup>16</sup>

##### *Tools of Expression Common to Both Oral and Written Language Vocabulary*

Learn new words gained through reading and experiences. Use new words in communication. Grasp new meanings and uses for known words. Find "picture" words in sentences and stories. Intelligently use technical terms such as *sentence, capital letter, small letter, period, question mark, greeting, closing, margin.*

##### *Sentence*

Realize that a sentence tells or asks something. Recognize a sentence, oral or written. Express ideas in short, clear, and correct sentences. Gradually eliminate *and-faults*.

##### *Thought Organization*

"Stick to the point." Arrange facts or ideas in time sequence. Answer a question pertinently. Follow an oral or written direction correctly.

##### *Usage*

Realize what is right and wrong in connection with the most common gross errors of the group: elimination of crudities, such as "brung," "clumb," "hisn,"

<sup>15</sup> L. J. O'Rourke, *Rebuilding the English-usage Curriculum to Insure Greater Mastery of Essentials*, Psychological Institute, Washington, 1934, pp. 97-98.

<sup>16</sup> Mildred A. Dawson, *A Course of Study in Language*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1949, pp. 8-29. Selected quotes with special permission of the publisher.

Attention to many items of less importance, such as undue emphasis on posture and mannerisms, can, however, be safely postponed.

An analysis of the provisions of textbooks and courses of study shows that the same factors are stressed in many grades. Obviously, attitudes, abilities, and skills are not mastered once for all in any grade; rather, there is a gradual growth and a need for reteaching in several grades. As in the case of experiences, grading is not based on the kind of factor but on sequence of growth within each factor.

**Grading Particular Elements of Composition, Mainly Written.** In preceding sections we have been concerned with certain general qualities of language work, oral and written, and with certain general abilities and skills related to those qualities. It is recognized that these general qualities and abilities are fundamental and vital and that they deserve the chief emphasis in teaching. But they are intangibles involving elements of thought, feeling, and judgment which make it necessary to deal with them in broad terms. There are certain other elements of language, mainly matters of form, that can be treated more objectively and specifically; and some of these are now considered: sentence structure, capitalization, punctuation, and usage. To a great extent, these matters of mechanics are controlled by rigid conventions; but standards are constantly changing, and personal preference is permitted to some degree.

In terms of averages, the sentences of children in the primary grades are largely simple in kind; complex, compound, and complex-compound sentences increase through the grades in the order named. This fact suggests a general order of natural development and emphasis. However, even more striking than the general progression is the fact that all kinds of sentences are used at all grade levels, at least above the second. The kinds of sentences used are largely affected by experiences, by the language heard in the home, and by the character of the teaching. Brown and Butterfield clearly show that if given opportunity and encouragement, some children in the primary grades will use complex forms of sentence structure, such as dependent clauses in an inverted order.<sup>15</sup> The implications for teaching, therefore, are that the general emphasis in instruction should follow the general order of development of thinking, but that individual children should be encouraged and helped to use types of sentence structure suited to their capacities and maturity.

Capitalization and punctuation are the most nearly mechanical elements

<sup>15</sup> Dorothy L. Brown and Marguerite Butterfield, *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, chap. 4. Also see David H. Russell and others, *Child Development and the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1953, p. 18.

Copy a label, a picture legend, or a story dictated by an individual child and written on paper by the teacher. Prepare all copywork with 100 per cent accuracy as to spelling, sentence form, capital letters, and punctuation marks. Check copywork with the copy to discover errors, and then correct them.

Dictation: Study, under teacher guidance, the correct form of a brief note and short story to be dictated. Listen attentively to dictation and visualize correct form. Write with 100 per cent accuracy. Check for errors and correct them.

Independent writing (near close of year, and perhaps not for all children): Write a three- or four-sentence story, telling about a personal or group experience. Write a simple note of thanks or an invitation in correct form. Transfer to independent writing the skills and techniques learned in dictation and copywork.

### *Writing Skills*

Manuscript: Head all written papers (including spelling and number papers) correctly according to prescribed form. Leave margins as prescribed. Write neatly, conforming to prescribed size and form for all letters. Check all papers for errors before handing them in.

Capitalization: Habituate the uses of capital letters listed for Grade One. Learn to use capital letters for other words as needed, such as Mr., Miss, Mrs., name of teacher or principal, pets.

Punctuation: Use period and question mark after statement or question. Place comma in date if used in heading. Copy correctly from blackboard the commas after letter greeting and closing; periods after numbers in a list; commas in alphabetized list of names, etc.

Spelling: Spell correctly any word written, asking teacher or classmate for help when necessary, or consulting a blackboard list.

## *Grade 4*

### *Tools of Expression Common to Both Oral and Written Language*

#### *Vocabulary*

Continue to enrich vocabulary through extension of experience into new areas of interest. Develop ability to use new words in discussion, reports, etc. Get meaning of new words from context. Begin the use of the dictionary to find meaning and pronunciation of new words. Learn to choose appropriately between two meanings of a word. Build an individual dictionary of new words acquired. Develop ability to choose vivid describing and action words to add to interest of sentences. Learn to appreciate rhyming words in poetry.

#### *Sentence*

Develop greater familiarity with kinds of sentences: Statement, question, command. Recognize and use the sentence that expresses strong feeling. Distinguish between complete and incomplete sentences. Learn to begin sentences in different ways (avoiding the "I" beginning). Correct faulty sentences. Write original sentences.

"ourn," "hern," "hissself," "theirselves," "them books," "this here," "ain't," "hain't." Gradually habituate the correct use of the forms: *came, has come, ran, has run, did, has done, saw, has seen, went, have gone, grew* (not "growed"), and *knew* (not "knowed"). Strive to eliminate "me and John" (for *John and I*).

### *Oral Expression*

#### *Major Activities*

Spontaneous conversation (stimulated and guided by the teacher): (1) experiences and observations in and out of school; (2) ideas gained from family and friends; (3) stories told or read in school; (4) pictures, films, recordings; (5) standards of courtesy (greetings, farewells, courtesies to visitors; (6) some use of telephone; (7) simple introduction, as mother to teacher.

Discussion: As outlined for Grade One, but with more attention to points of courtesy to classmates or adults, and extending to more evaluation of outcomes of enterprises discussed.

Asking and answering questions: (1) asking for information or assistance; (2) asking for guidance in making or doing something; (3) asking for permission; (4) giving clear-cut, correct answers to the questions of others; (5) listing questions to be answered in the course of a group observation or investigation.

Telling stories of various types: (1) about personal experiences; (2) original stories (created by imagination); (3) retelling of stories read or heard in classroom, over radio, or in comic strips; (4) entertaining the kindergarten or another grade by giving a planned storytelling program; (5) giving a planned and rehearsed story for assembly program.

Dramatization: (1) dramatic play (acting out home or community pursuits); (2) playing a favorite story, with or without dialogue; (3) playing original stories; (4) dramatizing safety or health practices; (5) dramatizing courtesy practices, as introduction, greeting a visitor, and the like; (6) pantomimes and shadow plays; (7) rehearsed play for an assembly.

Listening: (1) as in Grade One—for enjoyment, to stories, poems, plays; for information, during discussion, conversation, and to information read or told by teacher; to directions, to learn what to do or how to do; as a matter of courtesy; (2) listening responsively.

#### *Speech Skills*

Voice: Modulate voice to reflect mood and meaning. Strive to make voice audible and pleasing to hearers.

Enunciation and pronunciation: Sound beginning and ending letters and blend clearly. Pronounce words correctly. (See errors listed for Grade One, and add others common to the group.) Avoid running words and sentences together.

### *Written Communication*

#### *Major Activities*

Copywork: Copy from chart or blackboard a list, a note, an announcement, or a story written by teacher but composed and dictated by group.

*Written Communication**Major Techniques*

Write letters: (1) of invitation, to invite a speaker to address the class, or to invite parents or another class to enjoy a program or play; (2) of request, to secure books from the public library; (3) of thanks.

Write a notice or an announcement for the bulletin board.

List questions: (1) to guide a study or investigation; (2) to ask a speaker; (3) to ask at an interview.

List rules: (1) for safety; (2) for correct conduct in a library; (3) for care of supplies.

Make an outline: (1) of scenes or acts in a story to be dramatized, (2) to plan a report; (3) to summarize facts and ideas learned from a talk or report.

Write a class diary: (1) of seasonal changes; (2) of the progress of a class enterprise.

Write a brief report: (1) on a science or social studies topic; (2) on a favorite book.

Write labels or legends: (1) for the library, (2) for an exhibit.

Write lists: (1) alphabetical, of books, supplies, names; (2) of books on a given topic; (3) of new words learned.

Write a class program.

Make out library cards.

Attempt creative writing: (1) of safety or health rhymes, (2) of verse; (3) of a myth; (4) of a short original story.

*Writing Skills*

Capitalization: Of proper names, persons, month, day, holiday, city, state, country, peoples, *I* and *O*, greeting and closing of a letter, abbreviations of proper names, *Mother* and *Father* (when used in place of name), buildings, topics in an outline, titles before names, titles of books, stories, poems, etc.

Punctuation: Period after a statement or a command; abbreviation; initial; numbers in a list or outline. Question mark. Comma: in a date; between city and state; after greeting and closing in a letter; in a sentence including a quotation. Apostrophe: in a contraction; to show ownership. Colon after greeting in a business letter. Quotation mark before and after a direct quotation.

Spelling: (1) of contractions, of common homonyms, of names of days and months; (2) proofreading for correct spelling in daily written work.

Paragraph: (1) sticking to the topic; (2) indentation; (3) detecting extraneous sentences; (4) writing an original paragraph.

Manuscript: Meeting standards for heading, margins, writing, and spelling in all written work; developing responsibility for self-appraisal and checking.

*Grade 6**Tools of Expression Common to Both Oral and Written Language**Vocabulary*

Enrich the vocabulary by conscious acquisition and use of new words encountered in all areas of experience. Learn to interpret new words from context.

*Thought Organization*

Learn to keep to the topic under discussion. Determine the topic of a simple paragraph. Make a three-topic outline of a passage. Outline the facts and ideas learned from a talk. Outline data in preparation for a report.

*Usage*

Review and use correctly all forms taught in Grade Three. Learn to use correctly the forms of the verbs: *eat, draw, know, write*. Use correctly the forms: *any-no; can-may; don't-doesn't; good-well; himself-themselves; I-me; let-leave; teach-learn; wasn't-weren't*. Avoid "John he went."

*Reading Skills and Use of Books*

Master simple alphabetical order. Classify books for arrangement on library shelves. Organize and conduct a class library. Understand the parts of a book: cover, title page, table of contents, illustrations, index. Use table of contents and index to find data. Read to find facts. Make a book list. Review a book. Make a card file of book reviews. Read stories and poems for enjoyment. Begin to use the dictionary. Become acquainted with an encyclopedia.

*Oral Expression**Major Techniques*

Converse about individual and group interests, with more conscious effort to meet group (or textbook) standards. Introduce people (mother to teacher, child to adult, a speaker to an audience). Discuss group and school problems and plans, with more conscious effort to meet group (or textbook) standards.

Tell stories: (1) personal experience; (2) biographical; (3) myth; (4) folk tale; (5) safety.

Dramatize: (1) a brief story or a scene from a book, informally; (2) an original story; (3) safety practices; or learnings from a group project in social studies or science; (4) a favorite story, planning acts and scenes, dialogue, costuming, scenery, and properties; (5) by making a "movie" to summarize a group study; (6) by making a puppet show of an old tale.

Learn the simplest techniques in organizing and conducting a club: (1) elect officers; (2) hold a meeting.

Use the telephone to make a request.

Give a report: (1) about a book; (2) on an assigned social studies or science topic.

Read aloud.

Give directions clearly and correctly.

*Speech Skills*

Voice: (1) speak loudly enough; (2) portray meaning and emotion through expression.

Enunciation: (1) speak each word clearly and distinctly, sounding initial and final consonants clearly; (2) use lips, teeth, and tongue to enunciate; (3) avoid common errors in pronunciation; (4) learn to use pronunciation aids in dictionary, such as syllabication, accent mark, and re-spelling.

*Usage*

Review and use correctly all forms taught in earlier grades. Learn to use correctly the forms of the verbs: *choose, freeze, lie, lay, learn, teach, ought, ride*. Choose correctly between the prepositions: *at-to, in-into; among-between*. Compare adjectives and adverbs correctly. Avoid double negatives. Choose the correct forms of pronouns for subject and object.

*Oral Expression**Major Techniques*

Conversation: (1) developed as a social art; (2) attention to suitable topics; responsibility for participation; courtesies.

Discussion: (1) group discussion of class problems in accordance with accepted standards; (2) clear conception of the purpose of discussion; (3) panel discussion on special problems; (4) when and where not to talk.

Social courtesies: (1) at table; (2) in introductions, (3) in using the telephone; (4) in public places and to strangers, (5) when making purchases in a store.

Storytelling: (1) personal experience; (2) legend, (3) fable; (4) myth; (5) hero tale, historical or biographical.

Reading aloud, reciting poems, and choral speaking. Reviewing books.

Making reports: (1) committee report to a club; (2) factual report; (3) illustrating, by using map, graph, chart, pictures; (4) illustrating, by a demonstration; (5) illustrating, by making a movie; (6) group reports.

Club procedure: (1) organizing; (2) electing officers; (3) secretary's duties; (4) conducting a meeting; (5) making a motion; (6) learning simple parliamentary procedure.

Using the telephone: (1) business calls; (2) social calls; (3) courtesies.

Dramatization: (1) of social courtesies; (2) of a story; planning acts and scenes, writing dialogue, selecting actors, planning costumes and properties.

*Speech Skills*

Voice: (1) give attention to pitch, tone quality, expression; (2) make definite effort to improve voice through class auditions and constructive criticism.

Enunciation and pronunciation: (1) speak clearly and enunciate words distinctly; (2) correct common mispronunciations; (3) utilize dictionary aids to master pronunciation of new words.

*Written Communication**Major Techniques*

Letter writing: (1) business, of request; (2) social, including friendly letter, invitation, acceptance, regret, congratulation; (3) correct form; (4) stationery.

Writing factual matter: (1) an article for class magazine; (2) an opinion or a review of a book; (3) a report for a class booklet; (4) an autobiography; (5) minutes of a meeting.

Creative prose writing: (1) an autobiography; (2) a description; (3) dia-



## 350 *Teaching the Language Arts*

Use the dictionary as an aid in the mastery of new words: pronunciation, spelling, syllabication, meaning. Begin to understand how words are built, and to interpret the meanings of new words by analysis of root, prefix, and suffix. Choose the exact word to express meaning. Choose the vivid word to enrich meaning. Apply a knowledge of grammar (parts of speech) to aid in selecting the right word for the desired function, as well as the correct word form.

### *Sentence*

Apply the sentence concept to the elimination of such errors as the sentence fragment, the *and*-fault, and the run-on sentence. Use the various kinds of sentences (statement, question, command, and exclamatory sentences) to vary expression. Build sentences correctly and with greater variety of pattern as an outcome of some knowledge of the grammar of the sentence.

### *Grammar*

Learn the function and grammatical name of eight parts of speech: noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection. Understand that a noun may be common or proper, singular or plural, and possessive; and apply this knowledge to correct usage and correct writing. Differentiate between: singular, plural, and possessive pronouns; subject and object forms of pronouns; and apply this knowledge to the correction of possible usage errors. Learn the forms of comparison of commonly used adverbs. Understand the function of the basic sentence elements: (1) simple subject, complete subject, simple predicate, complete predicate; (2) adjective, adverb, and prepositional phrase modifiers; (3) subject and predicate in natural and inverted order. Learn to make the predicate agree with the subject in number.

### *Thought Organization*

Keep to the topic in a paragraph. Stick to the point in discussion. Discuss a problem to a conclusion. Plan a study: (1) break down a broad topic into major problems; (2) outline each problem into sequential minor problems (or questions). Gather data on a specific topic. Make an outline in preparation for a report, talk, or an original story.

### *Reading and Study Skills*

Learn to locate data in a book by means of: (1) table of contents; (2) index; (3) center titles and sideheads. Use a card catalogue to find books on a given topic. Make a bibliography of books on a given topic. Read: (1) to gain a general idea of a passage; (2) to find specific data. React to a passage read: (1) giving the main idea in a brief summary; (2) making an outline; (3) taking notes. Make an outline from notes taken from reading. Use a dictionary efficiently, including ability: (1) to find a word readily; (2) to learn its spelling, syllabication, pronunciation, and meaning; (3) to interpret common diacritical marks; (4) to use a pronunciation key; (5) to select the right meaning among several given. Use an encyclopedia.

## REFERENCES

- Broening, Angela M., and others: *Conducting Experiences in English*. Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1939, chap. 16.
- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, pp. 140-141.
- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in the Grades*. World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, chap. 4.
- and Frieda H. Dingee: *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*. Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 20-24.
- and Marian Zollinger: *Guiding Language Learning*. World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1957, chap. 4.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*. Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, chaps. 11, 13-17, pp. vi-viii, 247-256.
- Lyman, R. L.: *Summary of Investigations Relating to Grammar, Language, and Composition*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1929, pp. 58-64, 184-186.
- McCarthy, Dorothea, and others: *Factors That Influence Language Growth*. National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1953, pp. 3-5.
- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, index, pp. 61-69, 490.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*. Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, chap. 4, pp. 13, 15, 34-40, 188-190, 248-249, 297-298.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*. Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, chap. 3.
- Russell, David H., and others: *Child Development and the Language Arts*. National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1953, pp. 17-22, 42, 44.
- Smith, Nila B., and others: *Areas of Research Interest in the Language Arts*. National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1952, pp. 3-4.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*. D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, pp. 329-330.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*. Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 22-26, 99, 113-114, 166.

logue for a story dramatization; (4) a diary; (5) an imaginary conversation; (6) an imaginary letter; (7) an original story (personal experience, realistic fiction, imaginative); (8) a fable.

Creative verse. (1) a limerick; (2) a fable in verse; (3) a report; (4) a story. Note-taking, bibliography.

### *Writing Skills*

Capitalization: Review and apply correctly all uses of capital letters taught in earlier grades. Learn to capitalize proper adjectives and regions of the country expressed by North, South, etc.

Punctuation: Review and apply all uses taught in earlier grades.

Learn: (1) comma with words in a series; (2) exclamation point or comma with interjection; (3) comma to separate clauses in a compound or complex sentence; (4) quotation marks and other punctuation in more difficult quotation; (5) hyphen to separate parts of a compound word.

Spelling: Develop complete responsibility for spelling correctly all words used in writing and for checking written work for correct spelling. List personal "demons" and master them. Use the dictionary as an aid to correct spelling. Spell plurals and possessives correctly, applying rules learned in grammar. Learn and apply a few helpful spelling rules.

Manuscript: Make every written lesson 100 per cent standard with respect to class or school requirements for: (1) heading; (2) handwriting; (3) margins; (4) arrangement of work; (5) spelling; (6) technicalities of writing.

### EXERCISES

1. Examine samples of written work of children in one class and note differences in quality.

2. Observe children engaged in oral work. Report extremes in performance.

3. Rate several members of a class in one experience, using a minus sign for *less than satisfactory*, a check mark for *satisfactory*, and a plus sign for *better than satisfactory*.

4. Evaluate work in some class in terms of meeting the current language needs of the pupils.

5. In one experience such as conversation or a particular ability or skill, trace sequences, like sticking to a point, through the several grades in the Dawson course of study.

6. List the language experiences for a particular grade found in a textbook or course of study. Compare with work in preceding and following grades.

7. List specific attitudes, abilities, and skills found in a course of study or textbook for a particular grade. Compare with work in other grades.

8. Collect samples of children's work, either actual or as reported in a course of study or textbook, representing grade levels. Note development.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Developing Children's Power of Self-expression through Writing*, Board of Education, City of New York, 1952, pp. 52-59.

apparent community and pupil needs, and finally evaluating and diagnosing the specific needs of pupils by suitable classroom procedures.

The teacher should examine his local course of study or teacher's guide and make note of any help given in defining goals for the grade. If the course is complete, he may find there a comprehensive listing of goals; if not, he must look elsewhere, such as in textbooks or in supplementary books for grades in which no official textbook is provided. Probably the textbook will be used generally. The contents of the book in terms of specific objectives may be found listed in the table of contents, index, or manual, but probably it will be necessary for the teacher to examine the introduction and to go through the book page by page to make his own analysis and listing. He may come up with one such as the following, analyzing *Day by Day*, grade 4, in the Building Better English Series:<sup>1</sup>

**Experiences:**

1. Oral communication: conversation, discussion, telephoning, asking and answering questions
2. Written communication: business and friendly letters, invitations, thank-you notes, diaries
3. Dramatization and choral speaking
4. Creative writing: stories, verse, plays; observation and description
5. Giving information: talks and reports, announcements, explanations, and directions; introductions; interviews; filling out forms
6. Study and research experiences: compiling records, reports, outlines and summaries, bibliographies; using dictionaries, indexes

**Attitudes:** willingness to discover and correct own errors

**Courtesies:** courteous listening, giving and taking criticisms objectively, taking turns

**Vocabulary:** using picture words, sound words, action words; avoiding true expressions

**Sentences:** complete thought; correctness—run-ons, phrases; variety

**Usage:** saw, seen; is, are; did, done; isn't, aren't, am not; was, were; come, came; Dad and I; began, begun; knew; Mother (*not* Mother, she); good, well; ate, eaten; don't, doesn't; leave, let; sure, surely; this, that, those; ran, run; went, gone; a, an; teach, learn, taught, learned; took, taken; drank, drunk; any, no (negatives); there is, there are; himself, themselves; then, than; our, are

**Grammar:** related to errors above

**Speech:** audibility, distinctness, pronunciation of specific words, voice, delivery, audience contact

<sup>1</sup> H. A. Greene and others, *Day by Day*, Building Better English Series, Row, Peterson & Company, Evanston, Ill., 1941. Quoted with special permission of the publisher. Also see *A Program in English: A Guide for Teaching the Language Arts, K-12*, Denver Public Schools, Department of Instruction, Denver, Colo., 1953.

## Planning a Program of Work for a Class

It is necessary for a teacher early in the year to make some plans for the whole year's work, including such things as setting up goals for a class, outlining a sequence of work, deciding what phases can be handled best by whole-class work and what parts can be handled best by groups and by individual work, and gathering instructional material.

Some planning can be done before school begins by gaining some knowledge of the community, by studying teachers' guides, courses of study, and textbooks, by looking up school records, and by conferring with the principal and other teachers. Early in the term the teacher, as he comes face to face with the children, will reconsider his earlier plans by studying the accomplishments, capabilities, and needs of his pupils. Within a few weeks or a few months the teacher should know his pupils and be able to complete his preliminary plans for the year's work. All teachers need to make some preliminary plans. The need is more urgent for beginning teachers and for teachers taking up a position in a new school. We consider preliminary planning primarily from the point of view of the beginning teacher, who faces the problems for the first time.

**Setting Tentative Goals.** The first task is naturally setting up goals for the class, defining as clearly and as accurately as possible just what should be accomplished during the term. This problem may be broken down into several steps: making a list of tentative goals by examining and listing the contents of courses of study and textbooks, checking tentative goals against

and approached in order of relative importance: (1) experiences and (2) abilities and skills.

**Evaluation of Experiences.** It is well to begin a language survey with an evaluation of performances in the chief kinds of language experiences with which the class is concerned: conversation, discussion, storytelling, letter writing, and the like. The procedure of evaluation is simply that of providing opportunities for the children to participate in the experiences, estimating the quality of performance, and keeping records. The instrument of evaluation is the teacher's judgment, for which there is no alternative at present in the oral as well as written phases of work. Recordings are very helpful as an aid to evaluation of oral performance. Although standard scales for measuring written work have been devised, they fail in the main to add either to reliability or to the ease of making judgments.

Keeping records is an important step in the diagnostic procedure. A record form is made by listing the experiences on the left-hand side of a sheet of cross-section paper and writing the names of the pupils across the top, as in Table 18-1. As the children participate, the teacher records his evaluations of individual performances, using a simple system of marks such as a check for *satisfactory*, a plus sign for *better than satisfactory*, and a minus sign for *unsatisfactory*. The record will be cumulative, and in time it will provide a fairly complete record of the performance of each child in each experience.

In evaluating performances in experiences it is probably well to begin with the major areas and then make the analysis more detailed as need arises. Thus, for a class using the fourth-grade book cited earlier in the chapter, the teacher may begin his survey with oral communication, written communication, and study and research. As needed and when practicable, the teacher can extend the survey to include specific types of oral communication—conversation, discussion, storytelling, asking and answering questions—and to specific items in other categories.

The survey shows to the teacher the main areas of strength and weakness and, with his judgment of the social values of the experiences for his particular pupils, provides a basis for selecting and emphasizing types of experiences throughout the term.

In the preceding discussion nothing was said about the reliability of the teacher's judgment or about means of increasing that reliability. We shall assume, however, that since the teacher's judgment is considered in the training of teachers, it is to some extent reliable. Furthermore, the reliability of judgment of mentally alert teachers increases rapidly with ex-

*Punctuation:*

1. Apostrophe in contraction, o'clock, singular possessive
2. Colon in business-letter greeting
3. Comma in date, between town and state, greeting of friendly letter, closing of friendly letter, series, after transposed clauses, direct quotation
4. Exclamation point
5. Hyphen in divided word
6. Period after statement, number, abbreviations, and initials, in sentence outlines and lists
7. Question mark
8. Quotation mark in direct quotation
9. Underlining title of book

*Capitalization:* names of people and school, first word of sentences, I, heading, months, titles, holidays, days, towns, states, greeting and closing of letter, poetry, titles, labels, street, R.R., initials, Mother and Father as names, subjects, outlines, direct quotation, organizations, names of peoples or countries, other proper names.

*Manuscript form and neatness:* indentation of paragraph.

It will be observed that the contents of the language program are classified into the major objectives of experiences, abilities, and skills.

**Checking Tentative Objectives against Pupil and Community Needs.** The textbook analysis gives the teacher some idea of normal expectancy; it may or may not provide an appropriate set of goals for his particular class. To make this adjustment the teacher necessarily gives some attention to the socioeconomic status of his pupils, to language patterns and standards of acceptability prevailing in the community, and to the kinds of language experiences likely to be engaged in by his pupils.

**Evaluation of Performance and Diagnosis of Specific Needs.** Soon the teacher should begin a systematic evaluation of the children's performance in language and in time make a more complete diagnosis of specific individual needs. By simply listening to children tell stories, make reports, and engage in discussions, and by examining typical sets of compositions, the teacher will be able to make some estimate of the general language ability of the class, identify exceptional children, and possibly locate some specific areas of weakness. This informal, casual, sketchy type of evaluation, which it is assumed any teacher will make, is valuable as far as it goes, and it may be adequate for some teachers. Others, will want to supplement informal general evaluation by a more detailed, systematic kind of evaluation in order to bring into view all important phases of the language program and to reveal specific individual needs by means of check lists and tests. Evaluation may be broken down profitably into the chief categories of objectives

perience. As he works with children, especially with pupils of a particular class or grade, the teacher arrives at the point where he easily recognizes good and poor work. He can improve reliability of judgment still more by deliberately setting his mind to the task, by collecting and studying samples of his children's work and the work of others on the same grade level, and by basing his evaluation on specific points of merit—so-called standards. Much of the work in the preceding chapters should contribute to an understanding of what may reasonably be expected of children in various kinds of experiences at various grade levels.

**Evaluation of Abilities and Skills.** The basic step in the evaluation of abilities and skills is obviously to determine those which are most needed in carrying on experiences effectively. Analysis will reveal much overlapping; that is, the same abilities and skills operate to some extent in many of them. Thus, having something to say, sticking to the point, organizing logically, and using appropriate words and sentences apply to conversation, discussion, storytelling, letter writing, and creative composition. The importance of the different factors naturally varies somewhat with the experience. The business letter, for example, introduces a new use of the colon; outlining, a new use of capitals. The practical problem of the teacher is to think through and set up the specific abilities, skills, and attitudes that are required for mastery of particular language experiences.

This cannot be handled mechanically; that is, the teacher must pay some attention to the maturity and capabilities of the pupils. Hatfield gives a complete analysis of abilities and skills in relation to various experiences in his *An Experience Curriculum in English*.

As a practical procedure in setting up the proper objectives, the teacher may follow the plan suggested by Hatfield, that is, list specific abilities and skills separately for each language experience. This plan emphasizes the close functional relationship between experiences and abilities and skills; but it results in the preparation of a considerable number of check lists—as many lists, in fact, as there are experience units. There would be much overlapping in the several check lists, of course. An alternative is to use a master check list of abilities and skills, as in Table 18-2. In planning work on an experience unit, the teacher could go over the master list and note the particular abilities and skills that should be stressed in the unit, omitting irrelevant and nonessential items. Thus, in a unit on conversation, the teacher could include such items as free participation, having something to say, sticking to the point, and appreciative listening. This alternative procedure emphasizes the common need of certain abilities and skills in various experiences and serves to promote continuity and consistency of



Table 18-1. Chart for Recording Pupils' Performances in Language Experiences

Language experiences	Names of pupils											
Oral communication												
Conversation												
Discussion												
Telephoning												
Questions												
Written communication												
Friendly letters												
Business letters												
Invitations												
Diaries												
Notes												
Dramatization												
Choral speaking												
Creative												
Stories												
Verse												
Plays												
Observations and descriptions												
Giving information												
Talks and reports												
Announcements, explanations, and directions												
Introductions												
Interviews												
Forms												
Study and research												
Records												
Written reports												
Outlines												
Summaries												
Bibliography												
Dictionary												
Index												

attack. For the teacher's own information, and possibly for the use of pupils, it would be profitable to complete an ability-skill analysis record of all experiences. There is an advantage in putting the results into a single chart, as suggested in Table 18-2. The teacher, of course, should include in the chart and analysis only those items important for his grade and class.<sup>2</sup>

For evaluating all oral phases of work the teacher must make spot judgments, paying attention to attitudes, as pupils recite; to qualities of speech; and to such general abilities as content, sticking to the point, usage, and sentence structure. It is good procedure in evaluation, however, to concentrate on one or two particular items at a time.

Written work may be examined more leisurely and more objectively. In evaluating general qualities of content, organization, vocabulary, and the like, the teacher will still necessarily rely on his judgment. In written mechanics and usage, however, it is possible to use objective tests, either informal ones made by the teacher or appropriate standard tests. Generally speaking, teacher-made, informal objective tests are more easily adapted to the work of a particular grade. Patterns for suitable tests may be found in textbooks, workbooks, and standard tests. The matter is taken up in greater detail in Chapter 19.

In individual and class diagnosis lies the basis for the whole instructional program. It is generally agreed that conditions of good learning require specific language goals, recognizable and known to the pupils as well as to the teacher. Purposeful effort is motivated by a consciousness of need and concrete evidence of progress.

**Blocking Out Large Units of Work.** At this point the teacher is ready to make a tentative layout of the term's work, involving a basic pattern of unit organization and a plan for a sequence of units. Units should be organized in terms of experiences. The teacher decides what experiences should be included in the language program and how much emphasis each should receive. The sequence should be flexible. It is usually desirable to continue work on one experience until demonstrable progress is made. The selection and timing of the experiences may be profitably determined by the current situations arising in curricular and school-life activities. For example, early in the term when new children are arriving and when parents are visiting the school in considerable numbers, it is appropriate to have a unit on making introductions; and when the pupils are beginning

<sup>2</sup> Olive S. Niles and Margaret J. Early, "Writing Skills," *Journal of Education*, December, 1955, 138:32-33.

Table 18-2 Abilities and Skills in Language Experiences

Abilities and skills	Experiences												
	Conversation	Discussion	Telephone	Questions	Letters (friendly)	Letters (business)	Invitations	Diaries	Notes	Drama	Choral speaking	Stories	Verse
Attitudes:													
Free participation													
Improvement													
Self-correction													
Courtesies:													
Listening													
Criticisms													
Amiability													
Content:													
Topics													
Details													
Completeness													
Originality													
Organization:													
Pointedness													
Sequence													
Sentences													
Paragraphing													
Vocabulary:													
Vivid, apt													
Not trite													
Sentences:													
Completeness													
Accuracy													
Variety													
Speech:													
Audibility													
Distinctness													
Pronunciation													
Voice													
Delivery													
Usage:													
Written mechanics:													
Capitalization													
Punctuation													
Manuscript form													
Neatness													

realize that John, at the other side of the room, does not listen to her story because she does not make him hear. Because Jack is not chosen for the main part in a marionette show, he is finally convinced that his baby habit of sounding *w* instead of *l* (*wook* instead of *look*) is no longer an asset. Mary discovers that if she wants to contribute to the conversation period, she must cultivate a more pleasing voice and speak in sentences; and thirteen-year-old Tony finds that he can never be the announcer in the class radio show unless he enunciates more clearly.

Goals and standards of performance vary according to the individual; each is judged in terms of his own capacities and is encouraged to strive constantly for improvement. Individual goals are set up in terms of attitudes, abilities, and skills; and the children as well as the teacher are conscious of these standards. For this purpose, each child requires sets of specific goals for checking needs and recording progress. Individualization is thus achieved within a common experience. During a whole-class poetry-writing period one child wrote:

I had a cat  
And she was black  
She went for a walk  
And she never came back.

Another child produced during the same period:

Little Brook  
Why do you bubble all the way  
As you go  
Through forests and fields  
And cities and towns?

The first child must be commended for his effort and his rhythm, while at the same time he is led to realize that what he has written is a nonsense rhyme rather than a true poem. Jingles are fun and may be enjoyed as such, but they should not be confused with poetry. A specific goal for the first child would be familiarity with more poems and the realization that a real poem not only presents a sound picture but also tells something. He probably lacks words with which to express himself and needs further vocabulary work. He also needs opportunity and encouragement to express himself imaginatively, probably in prose. Even one good sentence submitted by this boy would call for commendation. The second author, on the other hand, has given a beautiful picture of the happy little brook, and one feels that she has had ample experience in free expression, although she needs help in punctuation and capitalization.

a new unit in the social studies, attention in language may be given to discussions and making reports.

More important than the sequence of experiences is the emphasis on particular abilities and skills within experiences. Growth in the basic abilities and skills is the essence of growth in language power, and emphasis on the basic abilities should follow consistently through all experiences and should be adjusted to the level of language maturity of the class. For example, at the lowest level of pupil maturity the teacher faces the problem of securing voluntary participation. This problem should be faced and met whenever the children are engaged in storytelling, discussion, or dramatization.

In sum, then, the teacher plans the work in terms of the major experiences taken up as current needs of the class dictate; and in each experience he stresses consistently the abilities and skills common to all language work and those required by the particular experience. The experience and its component abilities and skills constitute the working unit.

**Selection of Content for Units.** The textbook provides a program of experiences and of abilities and skills; of necessity the book provides content as well. The program of subject-matter content is suggestive and illustrative; it is not prescriptive. In fact, content—what children speak and write about—may often be better derived from the experiences and current interests of children. The teacher will add considerable vitality to the language program by encouraging pupils to make use of their experiences at home, on the playground, on vacation, with pets and hobbies, in assembly programs, in school organization, and especially in work in other curricular areas.

**Instructional Organization: Individual Differences.** After blocking out the instructional program and making a tentative plan for sequence, the teacher is ready to give consideration to the organization of pupils. He must at this point take into consideration the nature of learning in a particular phase of work and set up conditions that will provide for maximum individual growth.

One phase of the program is the carrying on of purposeful language experiences, such as conversation, storytelling, and dramatization. This phase can be handled well by whole-class work. The class provides the stimulus for the experience and a social situation; clarification of ideas develops from class discussion; a pressure for maintaining high standards results from an interchange of friendly constructive criticism. While the class is engaging in the common experience, individual needs, of course, should not be neglected. For example, seven-year-old Susan is led to

there is incidental concentration on specific goals according to individual maturity and needs. At other times the children will be engaged in a common project or unit, as preparing a play to celebrate Thanksgiving. In this unit work there are different tasks for children of different levels of maturity. All may participate in planning and in evaluating. More mature children do most of the research work and the writing of the script, while the younger children perform assigned tasks and participate as actors. The techniques of attitude-ability-skill analysis are usable. Special-training exercises on specific skills and abilities, oral and written, are handled as group or individual work. Possibly more use must be made of individual work; and for this purpose suitable self-instructional material in the form of workbooks and other printed instructional-practice exercises is of greater importance.

**Materials.** An essential part of planning and implementing a program for a class consists of locating, selecting, and gathering the necessary instructional materials, including those essential for stimulation (such as sources of content in other subjects), instruction (such as sample letters useful in building understanding of content and form), diagnosing individual and class needs, testing accomplishments, and practice on specific abilities and skills.

A good textbook meets these needs in part; and in addition to providing usable materials, it suggests patterns for original materials. If the language program stems freely from work in other subjects, the textbook will be used largely for reference. A detailed topical analysis and listing of the contents of the textbook will prove extremely useful. In the analysis, for example, all the instructional material on dramatization or all the material on usage may be brought together. The teacher may find it advisable to go further in the analysis, listing separately the material on particular usages, such as *began* and *begun*, *lie* and *lay*. This makes ready reference possible in class and individual assignments of work, study, and practice. It is helpful to duplicate the analysis outline and to give it to the children to place in their language notebooks.

It is unlikely that any one textbook will provide a sufficient amount of instructional material to meet the widely varying needs of all pupils in a class. Useful supplementary materials will be found in other texts and workbooks. Their judicious selection and use are required. In addition, of course, the teacher may accumulate files of original materials, particularly practice materials, on key difficulties. All supplementary practice materials should be indexed and filed by topics, so that pupils may have ready access to them.

The carrying on of experiences provides practice in the development of attitudes, abilities, and skills. This practice, incidental in nature, may not be sufficient to provide satisfactory mastery of all language elements; and to the extent that it is not sufficient, the teacher must provide directed training lessons on the essential language elements for those children who need them. In this phase of the work, the whole-class procedure is not usable except in the rare situations where all, or a great majority, of the pupils need the same specific training. Instead of teaching the class as a whole, the teacher must either break it up into small groups needing the same remedial work or use an individualized procedure.\*

A guide for the group or individualized program is provided by the analysis and check-list record of abilities and skills. In the grouping procedure, the children who need the same training lessons are taught as a unit. Grouping reduces the number of instructional groups to practical limits and makes it possible for the teacher to do some pointed teaching. In the individualized plan, each pupil works on his own particular difficulties. Little time can be given by the teacher to individual pupils, and consequently much reliance must be placed on self-help instructional material. This material should be broken down into specific topics, should be readily available to the pupils, and should be self-instructional and self-corrective.

In sum, the proper organization of instruction in language provides two basic types of work: (1) classwork for experiences, with incidental practice on specific abilities and skills and (2) special-training exercises or lessons on specific abilities and skills, largely group and individual, to the extent that special training is necessary to secure desired growth. The two types of work are complementary.

**Multiple-grade Situation.** In the single-grade situation children vary widely in language maturity, especially in abilities and skills; and an effective plan of pupil organization must be devised to meet these differences. In the multiple-grade situation, also, individual differences are great, but possibly not much greater. This situation differs from the former in that children vary in age and grade as well as in ability. The plan of pupil organization in the single-grade situation also serves very well for several grades. At times language experiences are carried on simultaneously in all grades, as in conversation and discussion; and within each experience

\* M. R. Trabue and others, *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, p. 98. Mildred A. Dawson and Frieda H. Dingee, *Directing Learning in the Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, p. 112. Niles and Early, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34.

schoolwork, curricular and extracurricular. Language does not need to be an isolated subject.\*

The alert teacher will find various school situations that serve to bring into play experiences as well as abilities and skills. In the social studies, children find occasion to write business letters, define problems, give reports, organize and outline, extend concepts and vocabulary, and use indexes in locating information. In nature study, they observe and report and find suitable words to express exactly what they see. In art and music, they note feelings and ideas and look for suitable words to express them. Class and school programs motivate oral expression; newspapers and magazines, written expression. On visiting days, children have occasion to serve as hosts, using introductions, friendly greetings, and courtesies. Specific examples may be given.

In arithmetic, children occasionally like to play cafeteria, using large cards on which have been pasted attractive colored pictures of cereals, baked ham, poached eggs, bottles of milk, etc., with the price per portion attached to each card. These pictures are grouped on the chalk tray in some such order as might be found in a real cafeteria. One child is chosen to select his meal; he announces whether it will be breakfast, lunch, or dinner; and as he slowly goes along, he picks up the cards indicating his choice of food and calls out the price. The children at their seats compute the cost of his meal, and the first to give the correct answer is the next to go to the cafeteria. Following each meal there is a discussion of the child's food: Did he have a well-balanced meal, including vegetables, something hot, and milk? It will be seen that a lesson of this type has as much value for language and health as for arithmetic.

Children dramatizing "The Shoemaker and the Elves" felt that the elves would want to sing at their work, and so they made a song for them:

Rat a tat tat.

Rat a tat tat.

Here's the hammer,

Here's the nail,

And here's the leather to make the shoe.

Attention to standards is as important as finding situations for using language in various school activities. The check list can be used to call attention to significant abilities and to maintain levels of performance. Wisely used, not made too obtrusive, this attention to language contributes to the effectiveness of instruction in other phases of work.

\* Dorothy L. Brown and Marguerite Butterfield, *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, p. 149.



In those situations for which a textbook is not reasonably adequate or for which published materials are not available or directly usable, as in grades 1 and 2, the teacher must develop and accumulate a supply of instructional materials adapted to his particular program of work. Copies of textbooks and workbooks in the hands of the teacher will be suggestively useful in laying out a basic program of work in experience, ability, and skill areas and in devising usable class, group, and individual assignments. Such books for the first two grades are McKee and Harrison's *Let's Talk* and *Let's Write*.<sup>4</sup> *Let's Talk*, for example, provides a program of work that includes:

*Social experiences:* giving talks, making up riddles, explanations, listening to poems, dramatizing, making introductions, writing a letter, making a record, telephoning

*General abilities:* talking so that all the others can hear you, talking when no one else is talking, telling the whole story, telling things in the order in which they happened, telling things that others would like to know about, not talking too long at a time, thinking what you need to say and then saying just what you mean, telling things in the order in which you do them, using words that say what you mean, learning to say things in new ways, speaking clearly, leaving out things that don't belong in the story, getting the meaning of what you hear

*Practice, training lessons:* filling in blanks to complete sentences, supplying rhyming words, listening for picture words, giving opposites, correctly using verbs (saw and seen, hasn't any and has no, I am not, I did it, has gone, has come and have come, is, are), pronouncing (*ing* in going, give me)

In addition to suggesting content, *Let's Talk* also gives useful helps on teaching procedures. For example, a story about a pet, following in organization a simple sequence of incidents, is suggested by a series of pictures representing each incident: A boy, accompanied by his dog, is sailing a toy boat in a pool. In picture 1 the boy reaches for the drifting boat with a stick; in picture 2, the boy points to the boat, inviting the dog to retrieve it; and in picture 3, the dog is swimming back to the edge of the pool with the boat in his mouth. The children tell the story in the order in which it happened.<sup>5</sup>

**Relation to Work in Other Subjects.** In the development of a systematic language program the teacher should not lose sight of the fact that language is an important part of all schoolwork or fail to take full advantage of the opportunities offered for language development in other phases of

<sup>4</sup> Paul McKee and others, *Let's Talk*, and its workbook, *Let's Write*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1956.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

**Schedule.** In the completely integrated program, language does not appear on the schedule as a separate subject, and may be part of a larger block of work—in connection with social studies, for example. Extra time should be allowed for work in language when it appears with another subject. If social studies alone is allotted one hour, social studies plus language should be allotted at least one and one-half hours. If language is assigned a separate period on the schedule, it should be placed close to the subjects with which it is closely related, probably social studies, nature study, and health. Language work derives a large part of its content from the closely related subjects. The needs for particular abilities and skills, and their practice, are provided incidentally in the related subjects.<sup>1</sup> As a separate period, language should occupy about one-half hour a day; when combined with handwriting and spelling, about one hour. These three language arts are sometimes grouped to provide for integration of related phases and for economy of time in handling writing material.

**Determining Accomplishments and Progress.** A final step in laying out a program of work for a class is to make plans for determining accomplishments and progress during and at the end of the term. Starting points for evaluation are found in the preliminary survey records consisting of samples, check lists, and tests that were made at the beginning of the term.

Progress in carrying on oral experiences is measured by the teacher's judgment of daily work and test exercises. Marking component abilities and skills used in carrying on the oral experiences helps to increase the reliability of the judgment of the total experience and serves as a continuing diagnosis. Original check lists can be used to record progress and accomplishment.

In the preliminary survey, samples of written work are taken. Samples taken later, during and at the end of the term, serve to show progress. If the children keep individual folders into which group stories and poems as well as their own individual stories are slipped, they will be able to note their own progress from time to time. Children of all ages like these collections, which can be bound into a booklet to take home at the end of the year. Illustrations of some of the stories and even simple songs can be included. As in evaluating oral work, listing key qualities of written work and checking each separately adds to the reliability of the teacher's judgment and serves for continuing diagnosis. If an informal, objective scale comprised of representative samples of pupils' work is constructed, it can be used as an evaluation instrument. Standard scales are available, of course, but the value of these for practical local use is doubtful.

<sup>1</sup> Trabue and others, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-111.

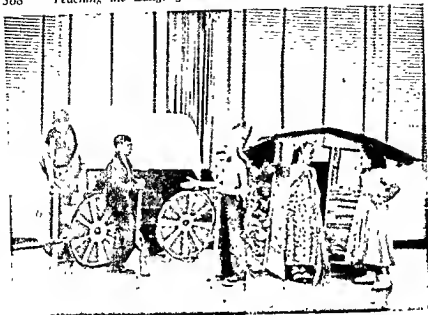


Fig. 18-1. Language is a tool in the social studies. Here children reenact a scene from pioneer days. (Courtesy of Hazel Lambert)

Following is an illustration of how language may grow out of work in other subjects. In a primary room the teacher had sent away for some cocoons. Their arrival and examination occasioned much comment. The words *shiny*, *rough*, *fragile*, *small*, and *brownish-gray* were listed as descriptive of their appearance. The names *Cecropia*, *Prometheus*, and *Polyphemus* were written on the board and pronounced by the children. Differences in the structure of the cocoons were noted. The cocoons were finally suspended by strings over the blackboard. Name labels were made by children to avoid confusing the moths. Then followed a trip to the library to gather more information. The children computed the approximate date for the emergence of the moths and marked it on the calendar. One child brought a book, *The Story of the Polyphemus Moth*, which was read to the class and greatly enjoyed. Other children found poems and stories about moths, and these were read to the class by the teacher or by individual children. Although the work originated in nature study, it should be noted that language, spelling, and reading were all interwoven and were as vital a part of the work as the nature-study objective. In effect, nature study was used as the basis of the language program.

- Hudson, Jess S., and others: *Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Twentieth Yearbook, National Education Association, Department of Elementary School Principals, Washington, 1941, pp. 269-271.
- Lee, J. Murray, and Dorris M. Lee: *The Child and His Curriculum*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1950, pp. 364-366.
- Lyman, R. L.: *Summary of Investigations Relating to Grammar, Language, and Composition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1929, pp. 198-211.
- Pooley, R. C.: *Teaching English Usage*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1946, chaps. 9-10.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School* Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, chaps. 5-8.
- Wofford, Kate V.: *Teaching in Small Schools*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1946, chap. 3.

The skills and general abilities of written expression—sentences, usage, punctuation, capitalization, manuscript form—can be measured by checking children's compositions from time to time, by using test exercises provided by textbooks, by preparing informal objective tests covering specific items, or by standard tests. Standard tests, of course, make possible the comparison of the class with other classes and grades, although the value of the comparison may be lost if the content of the test does not correspond fairly well to the content of the textbook or course of study. It is often advisable to construct informal objective tests that include the specific language elements of the grade and to give them at the beginning of the term and again at the end in order to measure and stimulate progress. Such a test may be closely adapted to the textbook and course of study, but it will not necessarily provide a means of comparison with the work of other classes.

## EXERCISES

1. Study and report the general plan for the organization and sequence of work in one grade, using a textbook or course of study.
2. List the goals for one grade from a textbook and a course of study in terms of (a) experiences and (b) attitudes, abilities, and skills.
3. Using information in (2), make usable check lists and class individual record forms.
4. Report results of a preliminary survey of pupils' performances in experiences.
5. Collect samples of pupils' typical written work early in the term; separate them into three groups: work that is unsatisfactory, satisfactory, and better than satisfactory.
6. If possible collect samples, similar to those in (5), at the end of the term. Note progress in paired compositions.
7. Work out a tentative plan of pupil organization for one class.
8. Report a class-individual analysis of key attitudes, abilities, and skills.

## REFERENCES

- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, chap. 9.
- Dawson, Mildred A., and Frieda H. Dungee: *Directing Learning in Language Arts*, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 58-60.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, pp. 8-9.
- Herrick, Virgil E., and Leland B. Jacobs: *Children and the Language Arts*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955, chap. 17.

inefficiency, helplessness, and stagnation. If a teacher must make a choice, perhaps the second evil is to be preferred to the first. But choice may not be necessary; it may be entirely possible for the student teacher to gain a command of practical techniques and, at the same time, an understanding of the basic principles upon which the techniques are based. This double grasp results in teaching on a high level.

**Importance and Significance.** The primary functions of language are communication, self-expression, and thinking. These functions appear early in the life of the child as inarticulate cries and gross bodily movements expressing demands for attention and feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. As the child matures, gestures, facial expressions, and sounds become more specialized. The expression of feeling and meaning becomes more exact; words express and communicate more accurately and economically than cries and gestures. The command of words and groups of words grows with practice and with the complexity of ideas and reactions to be expressed. The communication function is obvious. The use of language as a means of clarifying ideas and feelings is equally real, if not so obvious. Language is a means of clarifying perception, of discovering likenesses and differences in things observed, of forming general ideas, and of discovering relationships. One deals with symbols rather than concrete experiences.<sup>1</sup>

The operation of the communication and thinking functions is observable in the preschool years and throughout the school life of the child. These functions lay a broad foundation on which to base a language program having far-reaching implications as to content and procedure.

Collateral to thinking and the expression of ideas are two other functions, related and implied. In the first place, it is to be observed that communication and thinking, as do most other personal activities, necessarily concern other people. Language is a social act, a means of adjustment to and control over other people. The entire process of socialization is largely a process of language development. In the second place, command of language is an important factor in the development of the total personality of the child. Command of language gives a feeling of confidence, satisfaction, and security in meeting many life situations. Such mastery is a wholesome influence that affects the whole life of the child.

**Nature of Language.** The teaching of language is primarily conditioned by the nature of the subject. Language is, concisely, the manipulation of

<sup>1</sup> John E. Anderson, *The Psychology of Development and Personal Adjustment*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., New York, 1949, pp. 153-154.

## Principles and Processes

The language arts teacher needs to arrive at an understanding of the basic principles underlying his practice. Basic principles concern the place that language occupies in the *life of the child and the adult*, the nature of language, the growth and development of the child and the processes by which growth and development are facilitated, the significant factors that contribute to language development, the general curricular program of work, the differentiation of work to meet individual differences, and the techniques and procedures essential to the implementation of the program. These basic principles are stated or implied in the discussion of particular topics throughout the first eighteen chapters of this book. Because philosophy and psychology inherently relate to every practical problem of curriculum and teaching, they are best considered in the situations to which they naturally apply. The basic principles are summarized here, however, for emphasis and review and to help raise teaching above the level of mere pattern following.

The study and practice of teaching are threatened at two extremes. At one, the student teacher is occupied with abstract generalizations which, because of his inexperience, he vaguely conceives and indifferently applies. Knowledge of this kind has little effect on what the teacher actually does. At the other extreme, the student teacher is primarily occupied with acquiring a set of fixed patterns and with using them more or less mechanically. If the patterns are adaptable to the particular situation, he may do a good job for a time. But situations vary and times change; inflexibility results in

little change in total performance. The teacher's job in handling elements is to direct growth in a single element or ability while keeping it in its proper relationship to other abilities and to the total language situation of which it is a part.<sup>2</sup>

**Growth in language.** Complexity characterizes language in early stages of development, as well as at mature levels. Complexity appears in the evolution of kinds of language experiences and in their component elements. The order of development of language experiences is in part vague, but it is obvious that the first experience to appear is oral communication as the infant attempts to make known his needs through cries, gestures, grimaces, and words. The first language efforts are practical and utilitarian in purpose, relating to food, comfort, and pain.

When immediate physical needs have been met and a degree of maturity reached, the child becomes absorbed with the intriguing task of making the acquaintance of a great variety of things. What's dat? is asked frequently. Inquiries concern animals, cars, people, houses, trains—all sorts of novel objects and experiences. Asking questions is the characteristic type of language activity at this stage. "The three-year-old asked 376 questions and the four-year-old 397 questions during the day."<sup>3</sup> In inquiry, the emphasis shifts from use of language for communication to the use of language for thinking. The child is struggling to identify the various objects in his environment, to bring order into a confusing world of sight, sound, smell, and feeling. In this explanatory-naming stage, which continues for some years, the child's vocabulary is composed largely of nouns. "At two years there is a high proportion of nouns (50 to 60 per cent)."<sup>4</sup> Gradually, with increasing maturity and wider experiences, the child's concepts become more clearly defined, and ideas of relationship take shape. Thus, as the dog, horse, and cow are distinguished and identified, the *bow-wow* ceases to be any four-legged animal; the train says *too-too*; the dog *runs*; flowers are *pretty*. Correspondingly, language changes. Other parts of speech appear: descriptive words (adjectives and adverbs), action words (verbs), connectives, and pronouns. Growth in the uses of these various parts of speech goes on simultaneously. Anderson says, "All phases

<sup>2</sup> M. R. Trabue and others, *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> G. M. Whipple and others, *Child Development and the Curriculum*, Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Ill., 1939, p. 214. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.



experience by the use of symbols. It may be observed that the involved symbolism is purely arbitrary, as shown by the existence of different words in different languages to express the same idea; that words stand for certain concepts based on the direct or vicarious experience of the speaker or writer; that words have meaning to recipients only to the extent that they recall or are interpreted by similar experiences; and that growth in language is at once growth in experiences and growth in control of the symbols which stand for experiences.

Other significant factors in the nature of language concern the interrelation and the interdependence of language functions (thought, self-expression, communication) and of language experiences (speaking, writing, listening, and reading). A language experience, such as conversation, may include storytelling, discussion, explanations, directions, asking and answering questions, and introductions. In writing a letter, one is concerned with describing incidents, telling anecdotes, giving information, or asking for facts. Particularly significant is the fact that in schoolwork, oral and written experiences are combined and discussion often precedes writing; in the primary grades, the oral telling of a story precedes its writing.

Significant also is the complexity of the learning situation as it embraces the various attitudes, abilities, and skills which are consciously or unconsciously employed in carrying on language experiences. In a given experience such as storytelling a child selects content, builds to a climax by relating a series of incidents in a logical or psychological order, chooses appropriate words and phrases, uses a variety of sentence patterns for interest and force, cultivates voice quality, pitch, and modulation, practices pronunciation and enunciation, and acquires a favorable or an unfavorable attitude toward oral participation. All these important elements of language experience are progressively strengthened or weakened according to the concrete situations involved. Attitudes, such as a desire to be effective and a willingness to work on particular weaknesses, are essential to growth in language skills and abilities. Vividness and force are directly affected by variety of words and sentences. Content is conditioned largely by choice of subject. Organization depends on content.

The concept of language as a learning task, then, is a complex of interrelated and interdependent experiences and elements, in which growth proceeds simultaneously but in varying degrees, dependent on points of particular emphasis and interest. If the various elements could be isolated and developed separately, teaching would be relatively simple. Isolated treatment results in improvement in specific elements but frequently makes

and in getting along with people. In the second place, it has been observed that, although native equipment provides potentialities of growth, actual growth is conditioned very largely by the stimulation and direction provided by parents and teachers. A rich environment of varied experiences is essential to good language development. A third implication is that language is purposeful, not a mechanical or perfunctory act. The purpose is largely utilitarian—communicating and extending experience—but not exclusively so, because there is a place for the development of creative, artistic impulses. A fourth significant principle is that language develops as a whole—a whole made up of many complex, interrelated elements. A fifth principle relates to grading and sequence. The teacher attempts to set up a program of work that is consistent with natural order in the development of experiences, abilities, and skills. Goals are adjusted to capacity. Problems are recognized as characteristic of a particular age grade or maturity level, such as articulatory difficulties in the lower grades.

**Individual Differences.** The teacher is no less concerned with individual differences than with the general course of language development in children. Individual differences are marked in the experience phases of the work, oral and written. Some children participate freely in oral work, make worthy contributions, and show marked ability in thinking and expression; others do not. In written work, differences are much more apparent, appearing in both quantity and quality. Betzner points out that children in the five-to-eight age group write compositions varying from 9 to 1,074 words with a median length of 66.6 words, and that there is a similar wide range in thought units of 1 to 69.<sup>1</sup> Reed points out that the quality of compositions of pupils in grade 7 varied from 1.0 to 8.2 on the Hudelson scale. While there is progress in average achievement from grade to grade, there is great overlapping among grades.<sup>2</sup>

Extreme variations in total achievement are to be expected in composition work; they are, of course, no less wide and no less significant in specific abilities and skills. These differences appear as the teacher makes a check-list analysis of oral and written experiences; some can be measured objectively, using standard tests. For example, Reed gave the Modern School Language Usage Test to pupils in grades 4 to 8 with results shown in the following table:

<sup>1</sup> Dorothy L. Brown and Marguerite Butterfield, *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, pp. 17-18.

<sup>2</sup> H. B. Reed, *Psychology of Elementary School Subjects*, Ginn & Company, Boston, 1938, pp. 178-179.

of language development proceed at a fairly uniform rate. This indicates that language is learned by wholes, rather than by isolated and individual responses, and that the relative proportion of parts of speech is fixed by one general language pattern."<sup>6</sup> Words in phrases soon follow the use of single words, as in *Tommy cold*. The verb is finally added and the sentence form takes shape. *Tommy is cold*, *The dog barks*. At first, sentences are predominantly simple: declarative, interrogative, and finally imperative; but the complex and compound sentences are used early.<sup>7</sup>

It would seem that another kind of language experience which begins to take shape early is dramatic play. The first manipulation of objects is probably purely mechanical in nature; but soon the use of materials with a purpose seems to appear, as in loading a truck, moving blocks, or constructing an airport. Words accompany actions. Dramatic play becomes more complex and social when several children play together. Children express in action and words ideas about phases of life which interest them: preparing food, taking care of a baby, storekeeping. Further differentiation in kinds of experience performed appears with increasing maturity and the response to the demands of life in and outside the school.

It is also apparent that growth in performing an increasing variety of language experiences is paralleled by growth in the component abilities and skills, as was shown above in the development of vocabulary and in the use of sentences. This growth is likewise true of the mechanics of oral speaking: articulation, voice management, and pronunciation; the general abilities of having something to say and speaking to the point; and later the mechanics of writing.

Factors in growth are maturation and stimulation by environment. Maturation concerns the natural development of speech functions and processes of thinking. For example, the utterance of sounds follows a natural order, beginning with vowels and the consonant *m*. But maturation is also directly affected by language patterns set by other people and by the stimulation to thought and action of rich, varied experiences.

From this brief sketch of growth in language there appear certain basic principles significant for teaching. It has been observed in the first place that language is a vital part of the growth process. It is a vital part of the process of adjusting to life, physical and social; a means of gaining control of people and thought; and a means of bringing order into a bewildering world. Training children in language is training in living, in understanding,

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

and in getting along with people. In the second place, it has been observed that, although native equipment provides potentialities of growth, actual growth is conditioned very largely by the stimulation and direction provided by parents and teachers. A rich environment of varied experiences is essential to good language development. A third implication is that language is purposeful, not a mechanical or perfunctory act. The purpose is largely utilitarian—communicating and extending experience—but not exclusively so, because there is a place for the development of creative, artistic impulses. A fourth significant principle is that language develops as a whole—a whole made up of many complex, interrelated elements. A fifth principle relates to grading and sequence. The teacher attempts to set up a program of work that is consistent with natural order in the development of experiences, abilities, and skills. Goals are adjusted to capacity. Problems are recognized as characteristic of a particular age grade or maturity level, such as articulatory difficulties in the lower grades.

**Individual Differences.** The teacher is no less concerned with individual differences than with the general course of language development in children. Individual differences are marked in the experience phases of the work, oral and written. Some children participate freely in oral work, make worthy contributions, and show marked ability in thinking and expression; others do not. In written work, differences are much more apparent, appearing in both quantity and quality. Betzner points out that children in the five-to-eight age group write compositions varying from 9 to 1,074 words with a median length of 66.6 words, and that there is a similar wide range in thought units of 1 to 69.<sup>1</sup> Reed points out that the quality of compositions of pupils in grade 7 varied from 1.0 to 8.2 on the Hudelson scale. While there is progress in average achievement from grade to grade, there is great overlapping among grades.<sup>2</sup>

Extreme variations in total achievement are to be expected in composition work; they are, of course, no less wide and no less significant in specific abilities and skills. These differences appear as the teacher makes a check-list analysis of oral and written experiences; some can be measured objectively, using standard tests. For example, Reed gave the Modern School Language Usage Test to pupils in grades 4 to 8 with results shown in the following table:

<sup>1</sup> Dorothy L. Brown and Marguerite Butterfield, *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, pp. 17-18.

<sup>2</sup> H. B. Reed, *Psychology of Elementary School Subjects*, Ginn & Company, Boston, 1938, pp. 178-179.

of language development proceed at a fairly uniform rate. This indicates that language is learned by wholes, rather than by isolated and individual responses, and that the relative proportion of parts of speech is fixed by one general language pattern."<sup>4</sup> Words in phrases soon follow the use of single words, as in *Tommy cold*. The verb is finally added and the sentence form takes shape: *Tommy is cold*, *The dog barks*. At first, sentences are predominantly simple: declarative, interrogative, and finally imperative; but the complex and compound sentences are used early.<sup>5</sup>

It would seem that another kind of language experience which begins to take shape early is dramatic play. The first manipulation of objects is probably purely mechanical in nature; but soon the use of materials with a purpose seems to appear, as in loading a truck, moving blocks, or constructing an airport. Words accompany actions. Dramatic play becomes more complex and social when several children play together. Children express in action and words ideas about phases of life which interest them: preparing food, taking care of a baby, storekeeping. Further differentiation in kinds of experience performed appears with increasing maturity and the response to the demands of life in and outside the school.

It is also apparent that growth in performing an increasing variety of language experiences is paralleled by growth in the component abilities and skills, as was shown above in the development of vocabulary and in the use of sentences. This growth is likewise true of the mechanics of oral speaking: articulation, voice management, and pronunciation; the general abilities of having something to say and speaking to the point; and later the mechanics of writing.

Factors in growth are maturation and stimulation by environment. Maturation concerns the natural development of speech functions and processes of thinking. For example, the utterance of sounds follows a natural order, beginning with vowels and the consonant *m*. But maturation is also directly affected by language patterns set by other people and by the stimulation to thought and action of rich, varied experiences.

From this brief sketch of growth in language there appear certain basic principles significant for teaching. It has been observed in the first place that language is a vital part of the growth process. It is a vital part of the process of adjusting to life, physical and social; a means of gaining control of people and thought; and a means of bringing order into a bewildering world. Training children in language is training in living, in understanding,

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.



Fig. 19-1. A class newspaper provides occasions for various kinds of work. (Courtesy of Euclid, Ohio, public schools)

**Participation as a Factor in Growth.** Language has been found upon examination to consist of a variety of experiences through which the child carries on the business of living and learning and by which he exercises and gains control of specific attitudes, abilities, and skills. Normal growth in language takes place through participation and the simultaneous exercise of a number of component elements. It follows that the school, to be realistic and lifelike, must have its program on actual participation. The school must recognize the common language experiences of children and adults, and it must train children in carrying on these experiences. Situations in which language experiences serve an immediate purpose must be provided by the school. Emphasis must be placed on the whole learning situation; interest must be secured; insight and understanding achieved; and specifics—attitudes, skills, and abilities—learned as related, integrated components of the whole. This emphasis on complete learning experiences is an application of the familiar *gestalt theory*, a principle of psychology that underlies many modern educational trends and has wide application in various areas of the curriculum.

**Attitudes as Factors in Learning.** The whole, organic theory of learning is not inconsistent with concentration on specific elements as factors

Table 19-1. Distribution of Scores in Modern School Language Usage Tests, Grades 4 to 8 \*

Score	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
55			....	....	2
50			. .	2	10
45		1	. .	4	19
40		3	13	23	49
35	3	14	28	50	63
30	12	34	65	77	58
25	53	47	91	68	49
20	80	67	66	48	18
15	83	74	31	12	6
10	53	32	11	2	2
5	19	9	....	3	
0	3	6	.		
Median	19.70	21.68	27.44	30.74	35.39

\* H. B. Reed, *Psychology of Elementary School Subjects*, Ginn & Company, Boston, 1938, p. 178. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

This table shows data similar to that obtained by Reed with the Hudebson scale, which measured children's compositions, in that there is gradual improvement from grade to grade but a tremendous amount of overlapping. It may be assumed that what is true of composition work and usage is true of other general language abilities and of specific skills, oral and written.

Statistics give a reliable estimate of the range of individual differences that may be expected in any class or age group, but they do not give a clear, detailed picture of the individual children with whom the teacher must deal. General facts of variability are interpreted in terms of concrete realities as the teacher works with individual children from day to day in the varied intimate situations that arise in the classroom. Gradually each child emerges as a person, a complex of specific attitudes, abilities, and skills and of general powers. Each element appears as a clearly identifiable entity, but its significance is revealed only when it is considered in relation to other factors that combine to form an organic whole. The teacher must deal with each child as a person, as well as make general adjustments by providing different levels of work and by organizing general programs of instruction for children with varying levels of ability. The child is an individual, not a statistic.



Fig. 19-1. A class newspaper provides occasions for various kinds of work. (Courtesy of Euclid, Ohio, public schools)

**Participation as a Factor in Growth.** Language has been found upon examination to consist of a variety of experiences through which the child carries on the business of living and learning and by which he exercises and gains control of specific attitudes, abilities, and skills. Normal growth in language takes place through participation and the simultaneous exercise of a number of component elements. It follows that the school, to be realistic and lifelike, must base its program on actual participation. The school must recognize the common language experiences of children and adults, and it must train children in carrying on these experiences. Situations in which language experiences serve an immediate purpose must be provided by the school. Emphasis must be placed on the whole learning situation; interest must be secured; insight and understanding achieved; and specifics—attitudes, skills, and abilities—learned as related, integrated components of the whole. This emphasis on complete learning experiences is an application of the familiar gestalt theory, a principle of psychology that underlies many modern educational trends and has wide application in various areas of the curriculum.

**Attitudes as Factors in Learning.** The whole, organic theory of learning is not inconsistent with concentration on specific elements as factors



in the learning process. The teacher must recognize that it may be necessary *at times* to separate from the total learning situation specific elements for emphasis in order to bring about improvement in total performance. However, practice and training exercises should be handled so that their usefulness is clearly evident. The purpose of practice and its relation to a whole language experience must be recognized by the learner; and practice must be motivated by desire for improvement.

Of all the basic factors, attitudes are at once the most fundamental and the most elusive. Attitudes constitute the dynamics of learning, the drives to participate in experiences and to improve abilities and skills. Although real life provides adequate stimulation for certain kinds of experiences, the teacher may find that children in school are verbally inactive and unresponsive. The solution is to make schoolwork lifelike and to set up conditions that encourage free participation.

Even more difficult is creating a desire for improvement in the quality of performance; children may be satisfied with low-level performance. Some leverage for improving quality may be found in purposeful experiences, but good form is to some extent a matter of good taste or convention. The teacher may show the high social value of maintaining certain standards and may cite worthy examples and authorities. He represents, for the time, adult judgment and authority, and expressions of approval carry weight. Setting up specific goals and recording accomplishments are other effective means of motivation.

**Repetition as a Factor in Learning.** There is, in the new psychology, no magic which eliminates the need for repetition and drill; "that practice makes perfect is more than a half-truth," says Reed.<sup>9</sup> But that practice alone may fail to assure competency in language is amply proved by the results of traditional teaching. Making practice effective involves certain basic considerations.

In the first place, it is recognized that practice must be purposeful to the learner. Purpose derives from the recognition by the individual of his shortcoming and from the situation—an immediate one—in which the need for the skill or ability is felt. Implied are some form or standard with which a pupil can compare his work and some means of diagnosis. Need is often revealed by failure to make meaning clear or to convey a message adequately. Thus, a child who mumbles is *not heard*, and the class protests; and a child who combines his sentences interminably with *ands* is a bore. Going from obvious effect to cause is the most convincing evidence of need for improvement that the teacher can present. However, at times

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

own record of progress. The teacher should check and confirm the pupil's judgments. Repeated checking in tests and actual use, as well as restudy and practice, are constantly required until mastery is confidently achieved.

Adequate repetition, carried to the point of mastery, requires time, but effort should be concentrated on a short list of basic skills and abilities determined by cruciality and by the needs of particular pupils. Extensive treatment is necessarily sacrificed to concentration on a relatively few key language elements.

**Understanding as a Factor in Learning.** Traditionally, primary emphasis in learning has been placed on seeing, doing, hearing, and saying. Language is still largely learned by imitation, and good language is largely judged by its sound. However, understanding is recognized as an important factor in learning situations in which generalizations, rules, and principles can be formulated and applied. The traditional skill subjects are now being approached in part from the point of view of meanings. It is too early to say how far we may go in making the mechanics of language meaningful to elementary pupils, but some good examples of what may be done are offered in recent literature. For example, Smith points out that growth in the skills of punctuation and capitalization must mean growth in sensing relationships between ideas and gaining force through modification. The significance of the period and question mark are made clear by recalling what one does with the voice in oral reading.<sup>10</sup> Specifically in regard to commas, she says, "Commas are used to clarify meaning when sentence elements are out of their usual order, to separate interrupters from the main idea, and to make clear the members of an enumeration."<sup>11</sup> The growth of general abilities relates mainly to developing ideas and meanings, i.e., understanding. Grammar is an attempt to develop concepts, principles, and rules relating to usage and to the structure of language. Grammar provides a stock of ideas and understandings that help to make language intelligible, to give some insight into its structure, and to supply some help in the use of language forms and in the correction of errors.

**Differentiation of Instruction.** A differentiation of work suited to the needs of individuals in the class is necessary. This differentiation concerns all phases of work. In handling the experience phases, the teacher assists pupils in identifying and setting up general standards but allows each pupil to select a specific standard as he gives his talk and engages in conversation or dramatization. Moreover, the teacher judges each pupil in terms of his ability, not in terms of what other children do. For example, in handling

<sup>10</sup> Trabue and others, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

ability, such as selecting an appropriate subject, choosing pertinent content, dealing with a sufficiently small and manipulable aspect of a topic, organizing effectively, or composing a good beginning and ending. The emphasis is on knowledge, understanding, and judgment rather than on specific skills. An understanding of what constitutes a good subject, for example, evolves from a study and comparison of specific examples, such as "The Fish I Didn't Catch," "Hired, Tired, and Fired," and "Taking Home My Report Card," and from an analysis of key qualities, such as personal approach, definiteness, and brevity. The procedure is that which is characteristic of all knowledge getting—the solution of problems; it is never that of drill, as in the pronunciation of *get*.

The need for the lesson appears, of course, in an experience phase of the work, and it results from an analytical evaluation of the experience in terms of the specific factors that condition performance. The training lesson presumes inadequate performance and need for improvement. The need may appear as a result of pupil, class, or teacher evaluation; but it is important that the learner recognize the need.

The second step, logically, is to gain some understanding of what constitutes good performance. In the selection of subjects, for instance, the teacher may present to the class examples, good and bad, taken from current or previous work, from textbooks, or from reading. The examples are studied and the pupils are led to feel the difference between good and poor subjects. The teacher may present such subjects as the following and have the pupils discuss them:

<i>Poor</i>	<i>Good</i>
Where I Went	Catching a Rat
What I Heard	False Alarm
What I Did	Too Sure
Sunday	A Bad Shot
An Adventure	An Unexpected Ducking
My Trip	A Hasty Reply
Work	A Wet Seat
My Friend	The Battle of Chicken Run
What My Aunt Has	No Pie

Titles in the first list are found to be vague and weak. Titles in the second list arouse curiosity and a desire to hear more; they tap sources of personal experience and feeling; and they set specific limits on a composition.

From the study of examples the children proceed to a consideration of their own experiences, searching for phases that are interesting to others

and worth writing or talking about, avoiding commonplace and sensational events. Then they formulate good subject titles. Tentative lists of these titles are profitably presented to the class for evaluation and discussion. Approved subjects are then chosen, and compositions are prepared and delivered. The value of the subject is proved in the composition. When some assurance as to competency has been gained, the children use their improved ability in selecting subjects for all oral and written work.

**Handling Specific-skill lessons.** The third type of lesson or exercise with which the teacher is necessarily concerned involves the development of a specific language skill, such as the pronunciation of words (*often, going, athletic*), use of the comma in a series, and capitalization of *I*. Standards of usage are set by convention. The primary emphasis in learning is on hearing or seeing and doing; understanding enters into the learning process to the extent that it is possible to show reasons for certain conventions and to develop rules or principles. Understanding naturally adds to ease of learning in this as in other phases of language work.

The point of departure for a training lesson on a specific skill is an immediate need, revealed usually by performance in an experience. For example, in giving a talk a child may say *I seen* for *I saw*; or in written work he may fail to indicate clearly the persons attending a party by the omission of commas in a series of names, as in *Jo Ann Caryl and Tommy came to the party*. The pupil may be led to discover his difficulty by skillful questioning. The next step is to show the correct form to the child by explanation and demonstration or by directing the study of examples, correct and incorrect. Recognition of the correct form and, if possible, the reason for it is followed by deliberate practice in selected examples. Finally, consistent use in exercises and in related speaking or writing is provided. Work of this type is largely remedial, and involves breaking old habits as well as forming new ones. The work should be individualized, concentrated on a few of the most important skills, and followed up consistently and persistently until definite progress is made. The use of individual record sheets is helpful in making a diagnosis and later in recording progress.

There are many ways of handling directed training lessons on specific skills and at the same time employing good principles of learning. Specific procedures vary somewhat in oral and in written work, although the basic principles are the same. One procedure, making use of original sentences as a means of drill, is illustrated in the following quotation from Brown and Butterfield:<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Brown and Butterfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-93. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

Another common drill is having children give original sentences in which difficult forms are used correctly. For example, the words *seen* and *saw* are put on the blackboard. The children are told to make sentences using each word correctly. The results may be something like the following: *I saw a cat. I saw a dog. I saw a horse. I saw a bird.*

This kind of drill may be oral or written, but the temptation will be to have the children write the sentences because (from the teacher's point of view) this makes good busywork.

To improve a drill of this sort and to make it mean something to the children, the procedure can be changed somewhat. The teacher, to begin with, asks the children to tell, in their sentences, about something that they really *did see*. John gives the first sentence, "I saw a cat." The teacher remarks that this sentence is correct but that it would be more interesting to the class if he could tell a little more so that everyone could see the cat that he saw.

With a suggestion or two, John changes his sentence to something like the following, "I saw a big black cat with green eyes."

The class likes this sentence much better than the first one; others may try to imitate it. Then the teacher will suggest that there are many, many kinds of sentences using *saw* and *seen*. She will give an example or two: "When the boys went to the circus, they saw an elephant doing tricks," or "If Mary had not seen the funny little puppy, she would have gone right home." This will encourage the children to think out original sentences also. It is remarkable how much a few suggestions add to the vitality of a simple drill. The more intelligent children, instead of being bored by meaningless repetition, will be stimulated by the opportunity for creative expression.

**Relation to Work in Other Subjects.** The teacher recognizes that only a small part of his pupils' total experience in language takes place in the language class. Language is used throughout the day in all phases of work and play, and the use of language in other subjects and in all extracurricular work obviously helps set patterns and habits of expression. Language, therefore, is a service subject and as such involves two key points worthy of attention. In the first place, the immediate needs for particular language experiences appear in other phases of work. Various subjects require discussion, reports, explanations, and directions. Class meetings and pupil councils involve discussions, reports, and keeping minutes. When parents visit the school, as on school visiting days, opportunities arise for making introductions and explanations. In the second place, it is necessary to maintain reasonable standards in all language work in school if good habits of speaking and writing are to be established. In the social studies, in arithmetic, and in the school assembly some attention must be given to good speaking and writing. If properly handled this attention adds to the effectiveness of work under way, and it is not necessarily a distraction. The whole school should become language-conscious.

**Language Programs.** The language program, as we have said, should consist of real, lifelike experiences and training exercises as needed to develop the essential abilities and skills. The program is a functional one. Language experiences at once provide the chief immediate and remote goals, the chief medium of learning, and the basis for organizing the program into units of work. Training lessons grow out of and are motivated by immediate needs for particular skills and abilities revealed in the experience phases of the work. These skills are learned as far as possible in use—incidentally; but to the extent that further specific training is necessary, separate exercises or lessons are provided.

The minimum essentials of a modern language program, then, include (1) primary emphasis on and training in language experiences and (2) provision for the systematic development of essential language abilities and skills. Within the limits set by these minimum requirements there is opportunity for a variety of programs providing combinations of experience work and training exercises, and for programs offering opportunities to combine experiences and relate them to other phases of the curriculum. At one extreme must be recognized the very liberal or informal teacher who handles language mainly as an integral part of the work in other subjects and school activities and who provides only occasional directed practice or remedial lessons as needed by individuals and groups. Such a program can be excellent and may be regarded as the ultimate goal of language teachers. But the attempt to carry on the extreme type of informal program often results in gross neglect of training in language. Without sacrificing the essentials of a vital, functional program to traditional formality, it is possible to set a middle course consisting of a definite series of basic language experiences and supplementary systematic work on essential abilities and skills. This middle course makes possible the ready use of available instructional materials; and it seems to be consistent with the position taken by the Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English.<sup>14</sup>

**Use of Textbooks.** In considering the wealth of live opportunities for using language in curricular and school-life experiences, several questions arise: What place does the textbook have in the language program? What does it contain? How can it be used effectively?

In the first place, a textbook provides a basic program of unit work in experiences and related abilities and skills generally appropriate to the

<sup>14</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, *Commission on the English Curriculum, The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, pp. 35, 190.

grade, and it gives emphasis to the several experiences according to their importance. The sequence is timed—in part, at least—to meet the progressive needs of children throughout the year. Instruction and drill in specific abilities and skills are introduced as needed to carry on the various experiences. The textbook is the product of the study and thinking of specialists who are qualified by research and experience to write in their fields. In using the textbook, the teacher is taking advantage of this specialized, technical knowledge and competence.

In addition to a general plan of organization, the textbook offers certain other resources which the teacher must understand and use effectively. Among these resources are models of stories, reports, outlines, and the like. If wisely chosen, they suggest reasonable standards. However, for any particular class, such standards may be too high or too low. The teacher, therefore, should collect from time to time samples of his pupils' work to serve as *supplementary models*. In addition to their easier adaptability to a particular class, the local samples are more interesting than textbook models.

Another common feature of textbooks is lists of key points—standards—for particular experiences. Any such list may be well devised; the important question, however, is, What use should be made of it? In the authors' opinion, it is better to let children derive their standards from a study of samples and to use the textbook lists mainly for checking their own items than to have pupils begin by studying the standards of the textbook. The textbook lists of standards usually contain many items, and the implication here is that all children are to work on all of them simultaneously. Again, in the authors' judgment, such a procedure presents an impossible task to the children; if a long list is used, and it should be, each child should select one or two items for emphasis in giving a story or report. Such selection and concentration provide opportunities for individualizing work within a common experience.

commonly made for exercises in the development of ability to select suitable topics, to limit the scope of topics, to stick to the point, to follow a clear sequence of ideas, and to introduce interesting details and apt illustrations. Yet these language abilities are regarded as primarily important in the language program. If training exercises in this latter group of abilities are needed, as they may well be, the teacher will be obliged to supply them.

A further common textbook provision is the statement of principles and rules relating to concepts, usages, and mechanics. Rules and principles, it is generally agreed, should not be memorized from the textbook but should be arrived at inductively by pupils through a study of live examples. The textbook statements can then serve as checks on the children's own generalizations.<sup>13</sup>

There are several general ways in which a book can be used. One is, obviously, to follow it chapter by chapter and exercise by exercise. It is unlikely, however, that a textbook prepared for use in different sections of the country and for different types of schools will be found perfectly adapted to the needs of a particular class. Such use is tolerable only in the hands of a teacher who lacks confidence or thorough training.

At the other extreme, the textbook is used only as a reference-exercise source. In this case, the basic program is developed from purposeful experiences, largely arising in connection with other curricular and extra-curricular activities, and units and exercises are selected from the textbook as they are needed for training in particular abilities and skills. Mature, well-trained, progressive teachers are inclined to favor such use of the textbook because in this method the functional concept of language work is emphasized. The textbook work is also made vital and purposeful. However, this procedure may lose the planned continuity and sequence of training in essential skills which the textbook provides, and the teacher thus undertakes the responsible task of not only selecting the experiences but also working out a systematic, sequential, developmental program. This is certainly not impossible to do, but the teacher must recognize his responsibility and accept the amount of work involved.<sup>14</sup>

There is a third plan, which combines adjustment to present needs and the systematic treatment of technical content. The teacher follows the order of experiences set by the textbook, but instead of using the exact topics for oral and written work given in the text, he draws them from the current

<sup>13</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum, *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, pp. 332-335.

<sup>14</sup> Helen K. Bottrell, "Textbooks Can Be Creative Resources," *Educational Leadership*, April, 1955, 12:418-422.



grade, and it gives emphasis to the several experiences according to their importance. The sequence is timed—in part, at least—to meet the progressive needs of children throughout the year. Instruction and drill in specific abilities and skills are introduced as needed to carry on the various experiences. The textbook is the product of the study and thinking of specialists who are qualified by research and experience to write in their fields. In using the textbook, the teacher is taking advantage of this specialized, technical knowledge and competence.

In addition to a general plan of organization, the textbook offers certain other resources which the teacher must understand and use effectively. Among these resources are *models of stories, reports, outlines, and the like*. If wisely chosen, they suggest reasonable standards. However, for any particular class, such standards may be too high or too low. The teacher, therefore, should collect from time to time samples of his pupils' work to serve as supplementary models. In addition to their easier adaptability to a particular class, the local samples are more interesting than textbook models.

Another common feature of textbooks is lists of key points—standards—for particular experiences. Any such list may be well devised; the important question, however, is, What use should be made of it? In the authors' opinion, it is better to let children derive their standards from a study of samples and to use the textbook lists mainly for checking their own items than to have pupils begin by studying the standards of the textbook. The textbook lists of standards usually contain many items, and the implication here is that all children are to work on all of them simultaneously. Again, in the authors' judgment, such a procedure presents an impossible task to the children; if a long list is used, and it should be, each child should select one or two items for emphasis in giving a story or report. Such selection and concentration provide opportunities for individualizing work within a common experience.

Textbooks also provide practice and remedial exercises. Usually in this connection some kind of pretest or diagnostic test is suggested so that only the children who need the practice get it. This is a common-sense procedure. It is possible that some of the exercises will not be needed by any child. It is also likely that common difficulties will be found that are not covered in the test and practice exercises. In this case the teacher should devise tests suited to the particular needs of the children, possibly using the textbook exercises as models.

It may be found that the practice exercises in textbooks are largely devoted to the mechanics of speaking, writing, and usage. Little provision is

cannot be used for whole-class assignments, but it serves very well for individual and small-group assignments.

Old textbooks also can be used to provide supplementary practice material. If the material is not completely indexed by type of difficulty—and it probably is not—it is necessary for the teacher to prepare such an index. The index should be duplicated and given to the pupils for filing in their language notebooks.

Supplementary practice work should be individualized—directed at the point of difficulty. It is inevitable that children will be working on many difficulties at one time. The teacher will have little time for making assignments, giving oral explanations, and checking. It follows that the material should be housed so that the children can get it with a minimum of teacher effort and that the material should be self-instructional and self-checking. The answer key may be placed on the back of the practice exercise. Cheating will be discouraged if the teacher always gives tests on the work and checks it as completed only on the basis of satisfactory test results.

**Evaluation.** It must be apparent to the student in the field of language instruction, and even to the casual reader, that evaluation is an essential part of a modern language arts program and that such evaluation is continuous and cumulative, serving various purposes and taking various forms throughout the term. These purposes and forms, appearing as integral phases of the language program in preceding chapters, are summarized here.

The teacher's first purpose is an evaluation survey to determine early in the school year levels of achievement of the class and individual pupils, in terms of performance in language experiences and related abilities and skills. Preliminary surveys are made to provide a basis for laying out general plans and determining points of departure and to provide means for measuring improvement during the term. In the case of handwriting and spelling, for example, surveys make possible an organization for group instruction. The teacher should always be aware of the fact that he is dealing with several different kinds of language experiences and a multiplicity of skills, oral and written. Evaluation forms and procedures are therefore adapted to the experiences and to the nature of the learning elements. The teacher's subjective judgment must be the chief evaluation factor in *most phases of oral experiences, abilities, and skills.*<sup>18</sup> However, the accuracy of his judgment is improved by listing and evaluating specific

<sup>18</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, *Commission on the English Curriculum, The English Language Arts*, pp. 418-420.

lives of the children. This procedure is thoroughly consistent with the purpose and specific recommendations of many textbook authors. For example, as the basis of studying outlining and reporting a certain textbook sets up an experience in science in which children are told the following: "Stir into half a cup of water as much salt as the water will dissolve. Pour the water into a saucer. Let it stand until the water is all gone. What happens? What does this show?"<sup>17</sup> Although a particular class may not be performing this experiment at the time when the language unit is taken up in the text, it may be performing other science experiments or doing a similar type of work in another subject that will provide materials for outlining and reporting. The textbook, then, may serve as a general guide and model in programing language experiences and in using other curricular activities for developing language abilities; its particular subject-matter content need not be followed slavishly. The exercises for developing technical skills may be used, if needed, or similar exercises may be devised by the teacher to provide specific training. This third plan conserves the general plan of organization and the systematic program for the development and maintenance of technical aspects of language training as provided by the textbook, but it makes the work functional and relates it to current needs.

**Supplementary Practice Material.** Teachers often feel a need for more and different types of practice material than is provided in the text. Authors commonly provide supplementary practice exercises in workbooks designed to accompany and parallel work in the texts. Workbooks provide a convenient and inexpensive source of supplementary practice material and save the teacher's time. They are an additional expense to the school district or to the children, however, and often not available. If workbooks cannot be purchased for each pupil, the teacher can devise a reasonably satisfactory supply of permanent material by securing several copies of one or more workbooks. Selected exercises are then torn out and mounted on stiff paper. The material is filed in a convenient place, accessible to pupils, possibly in a standard vertical file. The topics for filing are the particular abilities and skills, mainly written, in which practice material is needed, e.g., content and organization, usage, capitalization, and punctuation. The teacher naturally selects the exercises that serve his purposes in meeting the individual needs of a particular group of pupils. This material

<sup>17</sup> H. A. Greene and others, *Day by Day, Building Better English Series*, Row, Peterson & Company, Evanston, Ill., 1941, p. 148. Quoted with special permission of the publisher.

problems of his grade and of preceding grades.<sup>22</sup> The form may follow that of the Charters tests and utilize proofreading or multiple-choice techniques. Tests also may be taken from the textbook or teacher's manual. Since the primary purpose of the diagnostic test is determination of individual needs, not measurement of achievement, the teacher-made test is as serviceable as the standard test. In diagnosing handwriting, the chief task is to determine the particular faults in letter formation, slant, alignment, spacing, and color of line. The teacher's casual judgments may be refined, as suggested in Chapter 15, by the use of patterns and diagnostic sheets provided by good handwriting books. Additional standard resources are Gray's A Score Card for Measuring Handwriting and Freeman's Diagnostic Chart. Diagnosis in spelling is mainly a matter of locating particular words causing difficulty and noting the nature of the difficulties. The customary weekly pretest serves as a basis for such diagnosis.

The third evaluative purpose of the teacher is to measure the achievement of children during short periods of time, from unit to unit or from difficulty to difficulty. Here again the teacher must rely on his judgment of achievement in most phases of the language program. Records of progress on specific items should be kept on goal sheets. The objective phases of the work—usage, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and handwriting—can be measured in large part by informal objective tests prepared by the teacher or selected from the textbook to cover the specific items involved. These types of informal objective tests are similar to those used in diagnosis.

The final purpose of evaluation is to measure progress at the end of the term. The forms and procedures for the survey are similar to those used in the preliminary evaluation at the beginning of the term. Judgments of general abilities and improvement in oral and written experiences are made by the teacher, using check lists of specific items for increased validity. Samples of written work, as in the case of handwriting and composition, are compared with the samples taken early in the term. Improvement in handwriting may be determined by scores on the Ayres scale. A final teacher-made test in spelling, covering the term's work, shows the progress of individuals and of the class; a Morrison-McCall spelling test may also be given again, but the results should not be taken too seriously. Informal objective tests covering essentials of usage, capitalization, and punctuation may be given and compared with scores on similar tests given early in the term; or standard tests may be repeated. Scores on tests of mechanics

<sup>22</sup> C. C. Ross and Julian C. Stanley, *Measurement in Today's Schools*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1954, chap. 6.

points; thus in judging a report, the teacher may concentrate on content, organization, and effective delivery. (In general, the check lists suggested throughout the book provide itemized bases for evaluation.) In appraisal of written activities, the teacher's judgment is similarly important; but the nature of written work makes objective evaluation more practicable through the use of suitable models. Standard scales, though, offer teachers little help in evaluating quality in written compositions. Only the mechanics of written work—capitalization, punctuation, spelling, handwriting, and usage—have been adequately covered in standard tests, which may be profitably used early in the year to compare the achievement of a class with that of other classes and to locate deficiencies of individual students. These survey tests are not truly diagnostic, although their results may be symptomatic. Many such tests dealing with various phases of mechanics are available.<sup>19</sup> The Unit Scales of Attainment in Language cover capitalization, punctuation, and usage.<sup>20</sup> The Ayres scale for measuring the quality of handwriting is widely used. The Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale provides a number of tests for use in grades 2 to 8.<sup>21</sup> Taking samples of handwriting early in the term and using them as a means of measuring class and individual progress is a sound, practical procedure. An informal preliminary test in spelling, made up of words taken at random from the term's work, gives the teacher valuable information on class achievement and individual differences.

A second purpose of the teacher is to make a diagnosis of individual accomplishments and needs in the performance of various experiences and in general abilities and specific skills. This diagnosis serves the all-important purpose of directing attention to specific deficiencies both in experiences and specific remedial exercises. Here, as in the preliminary surveys, the teacher's judgment, as well as the pupils', must serve. In written usage, handwriting, and spelling, more objective treatment is possible. Many standard tests are available, covering a large percentage of usage crudities. One such is Charters' Diagnostic Test for verbs, pronouns, and miscellaneous words, which is a proofreading test designed for use in grades 3 to 12.<sup>22</sup> Covering the work of all grades, standard tests of usage do not exactly fit the work of any particular grade. The teacher will therefore find it extremely profitable to devise an objective test including the key usage

<sup>19</sup> H. A. Greene and others, *Measurement and Evaluation in the Elementary School*, Longmans, Green & Co., Inc., New York, 1945, chap. 15.

<sup>20</sup> Educational Publishers, Inc., Minneapolis.

<sup>21</sup> World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y.

<sup>22</sup> Charters' Diagnostic Language Test, Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Ill.

problems of his grade and of preceding grades.<sup>23</sup> The form may follow that of the Charters tests and utilize proofreading or multiple-choice techniques. Tests also may be taken from the textbook or teacher's manual. Since the primary purpose of the diagnostic test is determination of individual needs, not measurement of achievement, the teacher-made test is as serviceable as the standard test. In diagnosing handwriting, the chief task is to determine the particular faults in letter formation, slant, alignment, spacing, and color of line. The teacher's casual judgments may be refined, as suggested in Chapter 15, by the use of patterns and diagnostic sheets provided by good handwriting books. Additional standard resources are Gray's A Score Card for Measuring Handwriting and Freeman's Diagnostic Chart. Diagnosis in spelling is mainly a matter of locating particular words causing difficulty and noting the nature of the difficulties. The customary weekly pretest serves as a basis for such diagnosis.

The third evaluative purpose of the teacher is to measure the achievement of children during short periods of time, from unit to unit or from difficulty to difficulty. Here again the teacher must rely on his judgment of achievement in most phases of the language program. Records of progress on specific items should be kept on goal sheets. The objective phases of the work—usage, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and handwriting—can be measured in large part by informal objective tests prepared by the teacher or selected from the textbook to cover the specific items involved. These types of informal objective tests are similar to those used in diagnosis.

The final purpose of evaluation is to measure progress at the end of the term. The forms and procedures for the survey are similar to those used in the preliminary evaluation at the beginning of the term. Judgments of general abilities and improvement in oral and written experiences are made by the teacher, using check lists of specific items for increased validity. Samples of written work, as in the case of handwriting and composition, are compared with the samples taken early in the term. Improvement in handwriting may be determined by scores on the Ayres scale. A final teacher-made test in spelling, covering the term's work, shows the progress of individuals and of the class; a Morrison-McCall spelling test may also be given again, but the results should not be taken too seriously. Informal objective tests covering essentials of usage, capitalization, and punctuation may be given and compared with scores on similar tests given early in the term; or standard tests may be repeated. Scores on tests of mechanics

<sup>23</sup> C. C. Ross and Julian C. Stanley, *Measurement in Today's Schools*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1954, chap. 6.

should be supplemented by observation of what children do in actual writing. Mechanics are mastered only when they are used habitually in purposeful expression.<sup>24</sup>

**Dictionary.** A good children's dictionary should be available to pupils in the intermediate and upper grades. Training in habits and techniques of dictionary use should be gradual and cumulative, adjusted to maturity and needs at succeeding grade levels. Practice in alphabetizing is the first step, which is provided interestingly through the making of word and picture dictionaries in the first grades and through the preparing of alphabetical word lists in the second and third grades. Alphabetical order is used in finding words, first by the initial letter and finally by the second and third letters. One of the early uses of the dictionary is for checking spelling, and this can begin in the third grade. Checking pronunciation can begin in the fourth grade, where attention is also called to syllabication and marks for accent and the long and short sounds of vowels. The use of key pronunciation words and of the other common marks of vowel sounds is taught in the fifth grade. The checking of meanings and the use of synonyms and antonyms to gain variety of expression may well be emphasized in the sixth grade.

## EXERCISES

1. Analyze one language experience, such as conversation, to show relations to other kinds of language experiences and component abilities and skills.
2. Observe children to report changes and development in uses of language, abilities, and skills.
3. Compare two or more children of a given age and report differences in language abilities.
4. Point particular ways in which learning by doing applies to language.
5. Summarize ways in which language instruction can be adapted to individual differences.
6. Describe a good language-experience unit.
7. Sketch a plan for handling a developmental-practice lesson on one ability or skill.
8. Show how language can be closely related to work in another subject, such as social studies.

<sup>24</sup> See also Iowa Language Abilities Test, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1948. H. A. Greene, *The New Iowa Spelling Scale*, Department of Publications, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. Dora V. Smith and Constance McCullough, *Essentials of English Tests, Grades 7-12*, Educational Publishers, Inc., Minneapolis. Iowa Every-pupil Tests of Basic Skills, Test C, Range 5-9, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. Cooperative English Tests, Grades 7-12, Educational Testing Service, Cooperative Test Division, Princeton, N.J.

9. Report the contents of a typical textbook and show how you could use it to advantage.
10. Relate particular means of evaluation to particular phases of language learning.

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, John E.: *The Psychology of Development and Personal Adjustment*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., New York, 1949, pp. 153-176.
- Breckenridge, Marian E., and E. L. Vincent: *Child Development*, W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1949, pp. 393-408.
- Brown, Dorothy L., and Marguerite Butterfield: *The Teaching of Language in the Primary Grades*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, chap. 1.
- Dawson, Mildred A.: *Language Teaching in the Grades*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1951, chaps. 1-2.
- Developing Children's Power of Self-expression through Writing*, Board of Education, City of New York, 1952, chap. 6.
- Hatfield, W. W.: *An Experience Curriculum in English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1935, chaps. 1-2, 12, pp. 241-244.
- Herrick, Virgil E., and Leland B. Jacobs: *Children and the Language Arts*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955, chaps. 1-3, 20.
- Hildreth, Gertrude: *Learning the Three R's*, Educational Publishers, Inc., Minneapolis, 1947, chaps. 1-2.
- McKee, Paul: *Language in the Elementary School*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1939, chap. 1.
- National Council of Teachers of English, Commission on the English Curriculum: *The English Language Arts*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952, chaps. 2-4.
- : *Language Arts for Today's Children*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1954, chaps. 2, 13.
- Pooley, R. C.: *Teaching English Usage*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1946, chaps. 9, 12.
- Russell, David H., and others: *Child Development and the Language Arts*, National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill., 1953.
- Strickland, Ruth G.: *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1957, chaps. 1-3, 18.
- Trabue, M. R., and others: *Teaching Language in the Elementary School*, Forty-third Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, part II, pp. 3-11, 26-40, 52-97, 118-147.
- Whipple, G. M., and others: *Child Development and the Curriculum*, Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Ill., 1939, chaps. 10-11.



# Index

- Abilities and skills, evaluation of, 359  
grading of, 341-344  
as objectives, 21-24  
selection of, 336  
sequence of, 341-344
- Acceptances, 82-84
- Achievement, in handwriting, 290  
records of (*see* Records of achievement)
- Announcements and advertisements, 152
- Articles, 136
- Attitudes, 28, 176-182
- Beginning work, in handwriting, 303-306  
in spelling, 282  
in written communication, 64-66
- Challenge of today, 2
- Charts, 159-164
- Child growth and development, 4, 375  
factors conditioning, 6  
in vocabulary, 195-198
- Choral speaking, examples of, 105-108  
goals in, 26  
place of, 100  
processes in, 101-105
- Communication (*see* Language, Letters;  
Oral communication, Speech; Written communication)
- Community needs, checking of, 356
- Content, ability to choose, 184-190  
in letters, 70-72  
in nature-study unit, 309-327  
in social studies, 327-330  
in spelling, 271-274  
for study courses, 345-352  
for units, 43  
in writing mechanics, 255
- Conversation, courtesies in, 40  
learning sequence in, 41  
materials in, 43  
objectives in, 39-43  
occasions for, 43  
processes in, 44-48  
example of, 45
- Correction of errors, incidental, 47, 221  
in writing mechanics, 74, 267
- Courses of study, contents for, 345-352
- Courtesies, 28, 182-184  
in conversation, 40  
in letters, 66
- Creative experiences, articles, 136-137  
definition of, 110-111  
plays, 134-136  
storytelling, 112-123  
writing, 123-134
- Diagnosis, of abilities and skills, 359  
in handwriting difficulties, 294  
of needs of pupils, 356

- Diagnosis**, in setting class goals, 354-359  
in speech difficulties, 236  
in spelling, 285  
in usage, 221  
in writing mechanics, 263
- Diaries**, 164
- Dictionary**, use of, 173
- Discussion**, definition of, 48  
lesson in, 52  
objectives in, 49  
processes in, 50-53
- Dramatization**, dramatic play, 88  
finger play, 87  
formal, 94  
goals in, 26, 95, 100  
informal, 90  
material for, 97  
occasions for, 96  
pantomime, 90  
processes in, 98-100  
for puppets, 93
- Evaluation**, 393-396  
of abilities and skills, 359  
in determining grade accomplishments, 369  
of experiences, 357  
in handwriting, 292  
materials for, 393-396  
in spelling, 281  
use of informal scales in, 78
- Experiences**, evaluation of, 357-359  
form and mechanics in, 257  
grading of, 339  
handwriting, 291  
language, and vocabulary, 201-205  
meaningful, in vocabulary, 198-200  
as objectives, 19  
selection of, 337  
sequence of, 340  
(See also *Creative experiences*)
- Explanations and directions**, 151
- Form and mechanics**, in content of written work, 254  
developmental lesson in, 259-261  
discovering difficulties of pupils in, 263  
in experiences, 257  
handling of errors in, 267
- Form and mechanics**, making meaningful, 261-263  
remedial instruction in, 264-266
- Forms**, filling in, 155
- Giving information**, announcements and advertisements, 152  
blank forms, 155  
explanations and directions, 151  
goals in, 27  
interviews, 154  
introductions, 153  
minutes, 155  
talks and reports, 139-151  
tests, 156
- Goals** (see *Objectives*)
- Grade goals**, in attitudes, abilities, and skills, 341-344  
difficulties in, 333-336  
example of, 345-352  
fixed versus flexible plan for, 338  
in grammar, 230  
philosophy and principles of, 336  
in spelling, 271  
in use of textbook and course of study, 337  
in writing mechanics, 344
- Grammar**, content of, 228  
functional, 32-34, 226-230  
grading and sequence in, 230  
objectives in, 32  
place of, 32-34  
processes in, 230-232  
technical, 232
- Handwriting**, achievement in, 290  
beginning, 303-306  
corrective work in, 295-297  
diagnosis in, 294  
evaluation of, 292  
experiences in, 291  
individual differences in, 292  
left-handedness, 305  
manuscript, 303  
materials for, 297, 302  
motivation in, 300  
organization of instruction in, 292  
planning of units in, 296  
programs for, 288-290

- Handwriting, remedial work in, 294-297
  - teaching of units in, 298
- Importance, of language, 2, 373
  - of listening, 59
  - of principles, 373
- Incidental instruction, 12
- Indexes and bibliographies, 172
- Individual differences, adapting instruction to, 362
  - in ages and grades, 377
  - in classes, 334
  - in handwriting, 292
- Instruction, group and individual, in handwriting, 292
  - incidental, 12
  - organization of, 382
  - in speech, 241
  - in spelling, 278
  - in usage, 223
  - in writing mechanics, 264
- Integrated program, handling of, 330
  - in nature study, 309-327
  - in social studies, 327-330
- Interviews, 154
- Introductions, 153
- Invitations, 82-84
- Language, importance and significance
  - of, 2, 373
  - nature of, 4, 373
  - research in, 14-16
  - second, 8
  - and thinking, 4
  - in total program, 13
- Left-handedness, 305
- Letters, business, 80-82
  - friendly, courtesies in, 66
    - objectives of, 66-70
    - processes in, 72-80
    - situations requiring, 70-72
- Listening, importance of, 59
  - kinds of, 59
  - in oral communication, 25
  - teaching, 59-61
- Materials, in conversation, 43
  - dictionary, 173
  - for dramatization, 97
  - for evaluation, 393-396
    - in grade planning, 365
    - in handwriting, 297, 302
    - for literary study, storytelling, 114
    - for supplementary practice, 392
    - textbooks, 389-393
    - in usage, 225
    - in writing mechanics, 266
- Meetings, 55-58
- Motivation in handwriting, 300
- Nature of language, 4, 373
- Need for teaching, 12
- Notes, and summaries, 170
  - thank-you, 82
- Objectives, abilities and skills as, 21-24
  - and attitudes, 28
  - and community needs, 356
  - content, 29
  - in conversation, 39-43
  - in course of study, 345-352
  - courtesies, 28
  - in creative activities, 26
  - in discussion, 49
  - in dramatization and choral speaking, 26, 95, 100
  - in giving information, 27
  - grade (see Grade goals)
  - in grammar, 32
  - kinds of, 21-24
  - in language experiences, 20
  - in modern education, 19
  - in oral communication, 25
  - in organization, 29
  - in reports, 141
  - in sentences, 30
  - in speech, 34
  - in storytelling, 113
  - in study and research, 27
  - in telephoning, 53
  - tentative, setting of, 337
    - in program planning, 354-356
  - in usage, 30
  - in vocabulary, 29
  - in writing of stories and verse, 127
  - in written communication, 26
    - friendly letters, 66-70
- Oral communication, conversation, 39-48
  - discussion, 48-53

- Oral communication, goals in, 25
  - place of, 38
  - telephoning, 53-55
- Organization of ideas, 29, 190-193
- Outlines and lists, 168-170
  - in reports, 147
- Past and present teaching, 9-12
- Planning of programs, blocking out units of work, 361
  - checking community needs, 356
  - determining accomplishments and progress, 369
  - diagnosing needs of pupils, 356
  - in multiple grades, 364
  - organizing instruction, 362
  - relating language to other work, 366
  - schedule, 369
  - selection of materials, 363
  - setting of tentative goals, 354-356
- Practice in spelling, 280
- Practice principles, 380
- Principles, attitudes, 379
  - child growth, 375-377
  - grading, 336
  - importance and significance of, 373
  - individual differences, 377
  - instruction, differentiation of, 382
  - nature of, 373
  - participation, 379
  - practice, 380
  - processes, procedures, 384-388
  - programs, 308, 389
  - relation to other subjects, 388
  - repetition, 380
  - understanding of, 382
  - unit organization, 383
- Problems and questions, 166-168
  - in reports, 149
  - in study and research, 166-170
- Programs, changes in, 9-12
  - in handwriting, 288-290
  - principles of, 308, 389
  - recent, 9-12
  - in spelling, 270
 (See also *Integrated program*; *Planning of programs*)
- Records of achievement, 357-361
  - charts, 159-164
- Records of achievement, in usage, 221
- Relation, among language arts, 5
  - of language arts to other subjects, 13, 388
- Remedial work, in form and mechanics, 264-266
  - in handwriting, 295-297
  - in spelling, 285
- Reports, objectives in, 141
  - occasions for, 143
  - place of, 139
  - problems in, 149
  - processes in, 145-149
- Research in language arts, 14-16
- Schedule, 369
- Second language, 8
- Sentences, 30, 209-216
- Sequence, in attitudes, abilities, and skills, 341
  - within experiences, 340
  - in grammar, 230
  - in letter writing, 341
- Speech, in activities, 237-240
  - conditions of, 237-241
  - correction of, 244-252
  - foreign-language background, 243
  - goals in, 34-35
  - needs in, survey of, 236
  - place of, 235
  - training lesson in, 241-243
- Spelling, adapting of word lists, 274
  - beginning, 282
  - current programs in, 270
  - diagnosis in, 285
  - directing of practice in, 280
  - functional-individual, 284
  - grading of spellers, 275-278
  - organization of instruction, 278
  - presenting of word lists, 279
  - remedial, 285
  - rules and generalizations on, 280
  - tests and records in, 281
  - textbook provisions for, 271-274
  - understanding in, 280
  - in written work, 282
- Stories and verse, writing of, materials for, 127
  - objectives in, 127
  - processes in, 130
  - qualities of, 123

- Storytelling, materials for, 114
  - objectives in, 113
  - place of, 112
  - processes in, 116-121, 130
- Study and research, diaries, 164
  - goals in, 27
  - indexes and bibliographies, 172
  - in language arts, 14-16
  - nature of, 158
  - notes and summaries, 170
  - problems, questions, outlines, and lists, 166-170
  - records and charts, 159-164
  - use of dictionary, 173
- Taking of tests, 156
- Talks, objectives in, 141
  - occasions for, 143
  - place of, 139
  - problems in, 149
  - processes in, 145-149
- Teaching processes and procedures, ability unit, 385
  - in choral speaking, 101-105
  - in conversation, 44-48
  - in discussion, 50-53
  - in dramatization, 98-100
  - experience unit, 384
  - past and present, 12
  - skill unit, 387
  - in storytelling, 116-121, 130
- Telephoning, objectives in, 53
  - processes in, 54
  - situations requiring, 54
- Testing (see Diagnosis; Evaluation)
- Textbooks, contents of, 337, 355
  - in spelling, 271-278
  - use of, 389-392
- Understanding, 382
  - in spelling, 280
  - of writing mechanics, 261-263
- Units, blocking out, 361
  - conversation, 44
  - experience, 384
  - general ability, 385
  - in handwriting, 296, 298
  - meaning of, 361
  - significance of, 383
  - skill, 387
- Usage, correct, conditions favorable to, 218
  - goals, 30-32, 220
  - incidental correction in, 221
  - individual needs in, 221
  - materials in, 225
  - motivation for, 219
  - place of, 218
  - training lessons in, 222
- Use of dictionary, 173
- Vocabulary, development of, 195-198
  - goals in, 29
  - in language experiences, 201-205
  - meaningful experiences in, 198-200
  - place of, 195
  - special exercises in, 205-209
- Writing of plays, 134-136
- Written communication, beginning, 64-66
  - form and mechanics, 35
  - goals in, 26
  - invitations, acceptances, and thank-you notes, 82-84
  - letters (see Letters)